SINOPAH
THE INDIAN BOY

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"I CALL HIM SINOPAH!"

SINOPAH

The Indian Boy

BY

JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ

(AP-I-KUN-I)

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

E. BOYD SMITH

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SINOPAH
The Indian Boy

CHAPTER I

SINOPAH GETS HIS NAME

THIS is the story of Sinopah, a Blackfoot Indian boy; he who afterward became the great chief Pitamakan, or, as we say, the Running Eagle. I knew Pitamakan well; also his white friend and partner in many adventures, Thomas Fox. Both were my friends; they talked to me much about their boyhood days, so you may know that this is a true story.

It was a great many years ago, in the time of the buffalo, that Sinopah was born, and it was on a warm, sunny day in June that he first saw the light of the sun, to which he was afterward to make many a prayer. The

great camp of the Blackfeet was pitched on the Two Medicine River, one of the prettiest streams in all Montana. Only a few miles to the west of the camp the sharp peaks of the Rocky Mountains rose for thousands of feet into the clear blue air. To the north, and south, and east the great plains stretched away to the very edge of the horizon, and they were now green with the fresh grasses of spring. The mile-wide valley of the Two Medicine lay like a great gash in the plain, and several hundred feet below it. Along the shores of the stream there was a belt of timber: big cottonwood trees, with bunches of willow, service berry, and rose-brush growing under them. Elsewhere the wide, level bottoms were splotched with the green of lowland grass and the pale silver-green of sweet sage. Thousands of horses grazed on these bottoms and out on the near plains; the Blackfeet had so many of the animals that they could not count them all in a week's time. There were more than five hundred

lodges, or wigwams, in the camp, and they were strung along the bottom, just outside of the timber belt, for several miles. Each lodge was the home of one or two families, the average being eight persons to the lodge, so there were about four thousand people in this one camp of the three tribes of the Blackfeet Nation.

Those were wild days in which Sinopah was born. Fort Benton, owned by the American Fur Company, was the only white settlement in all Montana. The Blackfeet owned all of the country from the Saskatchewan River, in Canada, south to the Yellowstone River, and from the Rocky Mountains eastward for more than three hundred miles. The plains were covered with buffalo and antelope; in the mountains and along the rivers were countless numbers of elk, deer, bighorn, moose, black and grizzly bears, wolves, and many smaller animals. So it was that the Blackfeet were very rich. They had always plenty of meat and berries, soft robes and

furs, and with their many horses they roamed about on their great plains and hunted, and were happy.

Usually the birth of a child in the great camp was hardly mentioned. But on this June morning the news spread quickly from one end to the other of it that in the lodge of White Wolf there was a baby boy. There was much talk about it because White Wolf was a great chief, and it was well known that he had long wanted a son. Everybody now said that the gods had been good, and had given him his wish. All that day the medicine men and warriors kept going to his lodge to say how pleased they were that this had come to him.

The chief's lodge was a very large one. It was made of twenty cow buffalo skins that had been tanned into soft leather, cut to the right shape, and sewed together with sinew thread. This, the lodge skin, as it was called, was stretched over twenty-four long, tough, and slender pine poles set in the shape of a cone. The lower edge or skirt of the skin did

not touch the ground by a space of something like four inches. But inside there was a lining of leather, weighted to the ground by the couches and sacks of household property, and extending upward for five or six feet. Thus, between this lining and the outer lodge skin there was a space of the thickness of the lodge poles, and this was the draught flue. The cold air rushed up through it and out of the open top of the lodge, carrying with it the smoke from the fire. There were two large wings, or "ears," at the top of the skin, held stretched out by two long poles. These were shifted one way or another to protect the opening from the wind, and so the lodge was always free from smoke. The skin was waterproof; the lining kept the wind out; and so, even in the coldest winter weather, a very small fire in the centre of the lodge made the people very comfortable. At night, when the fire died out, they lay in their warm beds of buffalo robes and slept just as well as you do in your warm home.

It was in the afternoon that Wesley Fox, a great man of the American Fur Company, and uncle of Thomas Fox, came to White Wolf's lodge. A number of warriors coming out of it greeted him pleasantly. He waited until they had passed, then raised the curtain of the little, oblong doorway, and stepped inside. "Ok-yi!" (Welcome) said White Wolf, and motioned him to a place on his right, which was the seat for honored guests. The chief's face was all smiles. He rubbed his hands together, then spatted them, and said, in his own language, of course, "White brother mine, this is the happiest day of my life. I have a son. Look, now, what a fine one he is, how big for one born this day as the sun was coming up. We are going to name him right away, and I ask you to stay and take part in the naming feast."

Wesley Fox was already looking at the child, or, rather, at its head, which was all of it that could be seen. It was wrapped around and around, arms and all, in several bandages

of soft cloth, and then laced into a cradle, the back of which was a piece of rough-hewn board. The lacings held the roll of him flat against it: he could not move hand or foot, or his head either, except for an inch or two to the right or left. Altogether, in his odd wrappings and lacings, he looked like a little mummy from the tombs of the Egyptian kings. The cradle was propped up at the foot of his mother's couch, so that he rested in an almost upright position. The mother, half sitting up against a willow slat back-rest, gazed across the length of the couch at the round little face, and there was a world of love shining in her big dark eyes.

The baby's face, as well as its short, thin hair, was of a red bronze color. It had a funny, tender little mouth, and its eyes were very bright. All at once it began to pucker its mouth and make a queer little cry.

"There! there! mother," the chief said anxiously, "it is crying; maybe it is sick. Oh, what if it should get real sick and die?

Do something at once for it, woman. If you don't know what to do, I'll get some wise old women to come in."

"There is nothing wrong with it. All babies cry a little," said the mother. And raising herself, she caught hold of the bottom of the cradle and drew it to her. There was no more crying, and the chief was happy again.

Presently an old, old medicine man, or sun priest, came in, followed by a number of warriors and women, all of them relatives of White Wolf or of his wife. They were made welcome, and filling and lighting his great stone pipe the chief passed it to the man nearest him, and then it went clear around the circle, each one of the guests taking a few whiffs of smoke.

After the smoke several women of the lodge passed around the feast, giving to each guest a wooden dish containing broiled buffalo tongue, dried camas root, and fresh, puckery berries of the red willow. There was much talk and laughter. The women passed the

baby from one to another, kissing it, saying how much it looked like its father, and talking foolish little words to it just as white women do to a baby of their kind.

The feast was soon over. No one was really hungry and only a very small portion of the food was eaten. The old medicine man, I-kuskin-i, or Low Horn, by name, had brought his own pipe, and now filled and lighted it and passed it around. He knew why he had been invited to the lodge, but for all that it was White Wolf's duty to tell the reason for the gathering of relatives, and so the chief made a little speech.

"Relatives and friends," he said, "soon after the sun came in sight this morning, he looked down and saw my new-born boy. Before he goes out of sight to his lodge to-night, I think it right that he should know the new-born's name. So it is that I have asked you all to gather here. I call upon our old friend Low Horn to say what the name shall be, and I now make him a small present: Low

Horn, in my band of horses grazing out yonder on the plain is a certain four-year-old black-and-white pinto. I give him to you. A white three-year-old, a roan four-year-old with a split ear, and a gray five-year-old, well broken and a swift buffalo runner, I also give you. Let us hear the name."

"Yes, yes!" every one exclaimed; "let us hear the name, O wise one."

There followed a long silence. The old medicine man sat bowed over in deep thought. In his hands was a small buckskin sack ornamented with bands of colored porcupine quill embroidery. Presently he laid the sack on the ground, straightened up, and said: —

"We all know that the naming of a newborn boy is an important matter. Some names bring good luck, some bring bad luck. I am going to try hard to give this little one a name that will please the gods, and cause them to favor him.

"Listen! It was long ago in my young days. One winter day I took my bow and

arrows and walked up on the plain to hunt buffalo. I saw a large band of them on some far hills and started out that way toward them. The day was cloudy and before I left camp people were saying that more snow was about to fall. After sighting the buffalo I hoped that a storm would come, for in the thick of it the animals would be easily approached. I walked on and on as fast as I could, for the herd was a long way off. When I was out in the middle of the great plain, Cold-Maker suddenly came out of the north. As always, he hid himself in the thick snowfall, which he drove in all directions with fierce cold winds. No one has ever seen the shape of him because of that. The stinging snow beat against my face, then at my back, then swirled around and around me. I could not see the distance of twenty steps in any direction, and knew not which way was the river and camp. I was lost and beginning to freeze. I prayed the gods to have pity; in some way to show me the way to the river.

"Then out of the awful swirling and drifting snow came a little creature with head down and drooping tail. It was a Sinopah. [The "swift" or "kit" fox of the Northwestern plains.]

"It passed close to me, showing no fear, just looking up once at me, its black eyes shining strangely, deep down in its snow-caked hair: 'Oh, little brother,' I cried, 'you are going to the sheltering timber of the river. Do not haste; guide me thither, else I die.'

"Sinopah was almost out of sight then, although so near. But when I asked for his help, he stopped and looked back, as if waiting for me. I walked toward him as fast as I could, holding my robe close against my face so as to shield it from the stinging snow. Sinopah waited until I was within ten steps of him, then pushed sidling on against the drift until nearly out of sight again, when he stopped as before, as if waiting. And so we went on and on. Sometimes the wind was in my face, sometimes beating against my side

or back, but I knew that that was a trick of Cold-Maker. He wanted to confuse me; to make me think that I was going now in one direction, and again turning another way. He wanted me to go around and around in a circle until he could kill me with his freezing winds.

"Through it all I had faith. I believed that the gods had heard my prayers; that Sinopah had been sent by them to save me. Sometimes, when it seemed as if he certainly had turned and was going straight back the way we had come, doubts for a moment filled my mind, but I thrust them out. The cold grew more and more bitter; the snow rushed and whirled into deeper and deeper drifts. I became weary; I wanted to lie down and sleep; and at the last it was all I could do to struggle on. I could not have traveled much farther when suddenly we began to descend a steep hill, and I knew that we were leaving the plain and going down into the river valley. It was so. We soon got to the bottom

and went on through the tall sagebrush of the lowlands. And then, seemingly very far off, but really only a few steps distant, the naked branches of cottonwoods appeared in the thick, driving snow, and I could hear the wind crying through them. I hastened then, as fast as I could, and soon stood in the shelter of the timber bordering the river. Right in front of me was a dead, bent old tree that I remembered having seen before; the camp was just a little way up from it. 'Little brother,' I cried, 'you have saved me.'

"But Sinopah was gone. I could not see him anywhere about. I went on and soon came to the camp and to my own lodge. I was saved. Sinopah had led me straight home. There and then I made a vow: ever afterward, when passing the dens of the Sinopahs, if I had meat I dropped a piece of it for them and their young."

"Ah, hah, hai!" all the guests exclaimed. "How wonderful. Great medicine was Sinopah."

Sinopah gets his Name

"Pass me the new-born one," said Low Horn.

A woman placed the laced little form in his hands and he looked long and kindly down at the round, smooth face. Then, taking sacred, dull-red paint from a little buckskin sack, he carefully rubbed it on the baby's forehead, nose, cheeks, and chin. Lastly he held the child face upward toward the sun, and said: "O all-powerful Sun, and you, Nap-i (Old Man), Maker-of-the-World: behold, I have painted the new-born one with your own sacred color, and now I name him. I give him a name for his young days. A name to last until he becomes a warrior and makes a name for himself. I call him Sinopah.

"Have pity on Sinopah, O you great ones. Make him grow up strong and brave; fill his heart with love for father and mother, and kind feeling for all our people. Give him long life, O Maker-of-the-World, and you, wonderful Maker-of-the-Days. Have pity on us

all, men, women, and children; give us all long life. I have said."

"Ai! Ai! You gods, have pity on us," all the guests cried, and at that they all arose and went their ways. The boy was named.

CHAPTER II

SINOPAH AND SINOPAH

ALL summer long, and all through the many moons of winter, the little Sinopah remained laced against his cradle-board the greater part of the time. The object in keeping him in such a position was so to shape the bones of his body that he would grow straight. Straight as an arrow, instead of round-shouldered and bent, as so many white children are allowed to take shape by careless or ignorant mothers. The close confinement in the cradle did not hurt him at all; but sometimes the one position grew irksome and the baby fretted. Then the mother would take him out of the cradle and let him roll naked on her couch until he tired and fell asleep, when back he would be put against the cradle-board.

When summer came again, Sinopah was

a year old, and from that moon of his first birthday he spent less and less time in the cradle, and more and more time in creeping about on his mother's couch, or near her out on the clean, short grass. Then, along in the autumn, after many attempts, he toddled on uncertain legs from his mother's to his father's knee as the two sat a few feet apart in the lodge. That was a great day for White Wolf. Straightway he gave a feast and summoned all the relatives, that they too might see his young son walk. Uncles and aunts, they all loved the child and were proud of him; and his old gray-headed grandfather, Mik-sik-um, or Red Crane, was his almost constant companion as soon as he began to creep.

On this day the little fellow wore for the first time the suit of war-clothes his mother had been long in making. The clean, white, fringed buckskin shirt blazed with bright embroidery work, of dyed porcupine quills. The breech-clout of red cloth was held in

place with a beaded belt. The fringed buckskin leggings were painted with small diagonal stripes of yellow and red ochre. The dainty little moccasins were embroidered with a solid mass of fine, glittering beads in the symbol of the sun. Very quaint and brave he looked in all his finery, and his infant mind and eyes were pleased with it all. He crowed and gurgled and laughed, and, with many a fall between, went from one to another of the admiring circle of guests.

Once he fell and struck his head against his father's tobacco-board. All present there held their breath, anxiously watching to see what he would do. But he did not cry: he sat up quickly, made a wry face, rubbed the bruised spot for a moment, then got up and lurched on to his mother's arms.

"Oh-ho-hai!" every one exclaimed, clapping hand to mouth; "he heeds not pain; he perseveres; he will become a great warrior."

"I give him a yellow pinto mare and a brown mare," cried an uncle. "White Wolf,

come and get them out of my band tomorrow and put them with your herd."

Then up spoke one after another of the guests, each making a present of one or more animals. In a few minutes the little Sinopah became the owner of thirty-five good, young mares: "Oh-ho-hai!" the old grandfather quavered, joyfully smiling and rubbing his wrinkled hands together, "think of the colts that will be coming every spring. Before ever Sinopah is able to go to war, he will be rich."

Up to this time Sinopah had been bathed in tepid water in the lodge. His father now took him in hand and upon arising every morning carried him to the river for a quick dip in the cold water. It was cold, the autumn frosts having already begun, but, though the little fellow's tender flesh shrank from contact with it and he gasped, never a cry came from his firm-set lips. Day after day the weather grew colder. Winter came and the streams and lakes froze over, but the

morning bath was continued just the same, holes frequently having to be chopped in the ice in order to get into the water. And no matter how cold it was, Sinopah went naked in his father's arms from the warm bed out on the snapping, groaning river ice, and into the water without a murmur. Afterward, following a rub before the fire, he felt so strong and lively that he could n't sit still a minute, and while his mother cooked the morning meal, White Wolf sat on watch to keep him from tumbling into the fire. The early morning bath was taken by all the Blackfeet, young and old, every day in the year. They believed that it enabled them to hunt on the plains in the very coldest weather, without freezing, and they were right. I have seen them cutting up game with bare hands when the weather was so cold that I did not dare take off my gloves for even a moment; and yet not even their finger tips were nipped by the cruel frost.

Sinopah had no other food than his mo-

ther's milk until his teeth were well grown. After that time he lived almost entirely on the meat of buffalo and other game, with sometimes a few berries and roots, fresh or dried. Fat buffalo meat was very nourishing. The women broiled or boiled it, and when great quantities of it were brought in by the hunters, they cut it into thin sheets and dried it in the sun for future use. Sometimes they pounded the dried meat into particles as fine as meal, and made pemmican of it. This was done by mixing the pounded meat with marrow grease; that is, grease taken from the bones of the animals. When mixed, the stuff was put into bags of freshly killed hide, and then the mouths of the bags were sewed up. As the hide became dry it shrank tightly around the pemmican and made a very solid and heavy package. One of these, not larger than a half-bushel measure, weighed more than a hundred pounds. The grease preserved the meat, and the hide pretty well kept the air from it. The mixture was always

sweet and good for many months, and was so very rich that a half pound of it was enough for a meal for a big, hungry man. All the Blackfeet women kept a supply of pemmican constantly on hand. It was considered a great delicacy, and was most often used for a part of a feast or gathering of the people.

When Sinopah was three years old, his father brought him one day a fuzzy, gray-haired animal which he had captured out on the plains. It was a "swift" or "kit" fox not more than a month old. "There, my son, is a pet for you," he said; "and now we have two Sinopah young ones in this lodge; one with two legs, and one with four."

Sinopah was not old enough to understand that, but he reached out for the funny little animal and held it tight to his breast. It did not offer to bite him, and was still too small to have any fear of man. It did fear the dogs at first, but soon became accustomed to them. Sinopah's mother fed it all the meat it could eat every day, and it became very tame and

playful. It loved the boy best of all the people in the lodge, and at night always slept beside him, curling up in a little fluffy ball on the pillow. It never made any noise during the daytime, but at night, if alarmed by anything, it would rouse up and bark in the oddest kind of a way. The noise it made was very hoarse and rasping and muffled, as if it were trying to bark with its mouth full of food.

White Wolf owned several hundred horses. They were allowed to graze out on the plains during the daytime, but at sundown they were all driven into camp and the leaders of the herd and the valuable buffalo runners and war-horses were picketed close to the lodge, to prevent the enemy stealing them. The Blackfeet were always at war with the Sioux, Crows, Crees, and other tribes, and parties of these warriors were always prowling around.

One bright moonlight night, after the fire had died out and every one was sound asleep, the little fox gave a couple of hoarse, low

growls that awakened Sinopah's mother. The moonlight was streaming straight down through the smoke-hole of the lodge, making everything inside as plain as day, and she could see the little fellow sniffing the air with its slender, black, keen nose, and working its big, long ears nervously as it cocked its head to one side and another, listening intently. "What hear you, little wise one? What is it outside, O keen smeller?" she whispered, reaching over and patting him on the back.

Her caressing hand gave him courage; he got up and sneaked out of the lodge, crouching so close to the ground that his belly fairly touched it. The lodge skin was always kept raised a few inches at one side of the doorway so he could go and come whenever he chose to. This time he was gone no more than a minute. Back he came on the run, barking hoarsely, all his fur stiff on end, and climbed onto the couch, snuggling close to his best friend, Sinopah.

"Wake up! Wake up," the mother whis-

pered, bending over White Wolf and shaking him. "Awake! the little fox has been outside and has returned terribly scared."

No sooner were the words spoken than White Wolf was out of bed and making for the doorway of the lodge with gun in hand. Kneeling down he drew the curtain slowly aside and looked out: not ten steps away a man was untieing the rope of his best buffalo horse from the picket-pin. As quickly as possible he poked his gun out, took aim, and fired. Bang it went, and following the report the man gave a piercing scream, leaped high in the air, and fell, never to move again.

At that the whole camp was awakened. Men rushed out of their lodges and began shooting at a number of the enemy, some running away on foot, others riding off on horses they had already loosed from the pickets. Some of the women in the lodges cried wildly in their terror; children yelled; dogs barked and howled. But in White Wolf's lodge not a sound was to be heard. Little

Sinopah waked up, heard the shooting and yelling and confusion of noise, and began to cry, but his mother quieted him at once: "There! there!" she said, putting him back in the bed and covering him up; "it is nothing; only some men come to steal horses and father is driving them away."

But for all her brave words her heart was full of fear. The enemy was shooting back at the men of the camp; one of their bullets might make her a widow and Sinopah an orphan. She began praying the gods to bring White Wolf safely back. Shivering from fright the little fox stuck his nose under the robe covering of the couch, then wriggled down beside the boy and growled occasionally. The mother sat waiting and watching. The old grandfather had been fumbling back of his couch for his bow and quiver case. He found it now and went hobbling out of the lodge on his rheumatic legs, muttering what he would do to the enemy if he could get within bow-shot of them.

Soon after the old man went out, the shooting and yelling ceased, and in a few moments the frightened women and children became quiet. Then, away out on the plain, faint at first, but growing louder and louder, was heard the victory song. All knew what that meant: the men of the camp had killed some of the enemy and were returning. At that the people began to pour out of the lodges, each one joyfully shouting the name of husband, brother, or son who had been in the fight.

Sinopah's mother gently lifted him from the couch and hurried out with him in her arms, crying: "White Wolf! My man White Wolf! He has fought the enemy and returns victorious; a great chief is my man White Wolf."

Close in front of the lodge a crowd of women and children was gathering, and she edged her way into it. There in their midst lay a man stretched out on his back, his wide-open, glassy eyes staring straight up at

the moon; but the light had gone out of them forever.

Old Red Crane was bending over the body examining it: "'T is a Crow warrior," he suddenly shouted, "and 't was my son who killed him. Great is White Wolf, the chief."

"True! True!" every one cried. "White Wolf is a chief."

The old man looked around, saw Sinopah, and took him from his mother's arms: "Look, little one," he said: "See what your father has done. He has killed an enemy. That is a Crow warrior; your father killed him."

Sinopah, looking down, clapped his hands and laughed. "Crow enemy," he lisped. "Father killed him."

And then he saw a necklace of big, long grizzly bear claws around the man's neck: "Give me! Give me!" he cried, motioning at it impatiently with his little hand. "Sinopah wants bear finger necklace."

"Yes, yes. You shall have it," old Red

Crane answered; and stooping over he cut the string, then retied it and slipped the necklace over the boy's head.

Sinopah shook it and the hard claws rattled against one another; that pleased him and he laughed.

Again Red Crane called his attention to the dead enemy and quavered: "When Sinopah grows up he must be brave and kill many Crow men."

The boy laughed and answered: "Sinopah kill many Crows."

Meantime the men of the camp, some on horses and some on foot, were coming closer, and still singing the victory song. At last they came into the camp bringing the scalps and weapons of five Crows they had overtaken and killed. True, the Crows had managed to take a few horses and get away with them, but that did not matter; there were plenty of horses. The whole camp went wild with joy over the killing of the enemy. All the rest of the night there was feasting, singing,

and dancing, and over and over the men told how they had pursued the enemy and fought them.

All of this made a deep impression upon Sinopah. In a way his child mind grasped the fact that to kill an enemy was the greatest thing a Blackfoot could do. All through the excitement Red Crane was by his side pointing out how the people praised his father, and making him repeat after them: "White Wolf! A great chief is White Wolf."

When daylight came the old man led him out for another look at the dead Crow in front of the lodge, and the boy had no fear of the cold, still form. That was what the old grandfather wanted: to impress upon him the fact that a dead enemy was something to make the heart glad.

It was later in the day that Sinopah's mother told how the little fox had been first to discover the enemy and give the alarm. The story soon spread through the camp,

and as owner of the pet, the boy came in for a share of the praise that was given it.

Among others, the old medicine man Low Horn came to the lodge. After a smoke, he made those present a little speech: "I can see that this little Sinopah is going to have great luck," he said. "Surely the gods favor him. It was their will that he should have the pet fox that saved us some lives and our horses last night. My medicine tells me that this boy is to be a great warrior; that he will live long; that he will be full of pity for those who mourn, and generous to the aged and the widows and orphans."

"That is what we all pray for," said the old grandfather. "I hope that the gods will spare me a little while longer. I want to help White Wolf teach the boy. I want to be here to see him returning proud and successful from his first war-trail."

CHAPTER III

SINOPAH AND HIS PLAYFELLOWS

IT was not until Sinopah was four years old that his mother ever let him out of her sight. If she missed him for a minute, even, she would run about and find him, and keep him close to her side. White Wolf often told her that she should give the little one more freedom, but for answer she would only shake her head and reply: "You are wrong. He is very much too young to be turned loose."

So White Wolf let her have her way until Sinopah's fourth summer came, and then he said to her one day: "You have done well with this boy of ours. You have fed him good food and kept him strong and healthy. But it is not right for a boy to be long kept in the lodge; he must learn early to make a play of the things that he will have to do in ear-

nest when he grows up. From this day on he shall go about as he pleases with the children of the camp."

"What you say to do must be done," Tsistsaki replied, "and I know that you are right. But you know how it is with us women; we are always timid. Therefore, for a time, when our son goes out to play, I will go too. At least I will be near enough to see that no harm comes to him."

Tsistsaki, I had forgotten to tell you, was the name of Sinopah's mother. In the Blackfoot language it means Little Bird Woman. That is a very pretty name and a very good one. Before her time many noted women of the tribe had borne it, and for that reason she was very glad that it had been given to her.

In the next lodge there was a little boy seven years old, named Lone Bull, and his younger sister Otaki, Yellow Weasel Woman, with whom the little Sinopah was now allowed to play, and they were very glad to have him

with them. There were also many other children in that part of the camp, some of them much older than these, and often there would be twenty or thirty of them together in their different games. Better than all the rest, Sinopah liked Lone Bull and Otaki, perhaps because they lived so close to him, and then their mothers were very close friends.

The two mothers got together one day and planned what was to be a surprise for the children. Having decided, they set to work and for all of a moon's time they were very busy when the little ones were out playing. And often, when all others were asleep, they worked far into the night by the light of the little lodge fires. Another part of the work was the training of three big dogs for their share in the game; and right here I must tell you about this breed.

The Indians never had horses until they obtained them from the Spaniards, who brought some to Mexico soon after the discovery of America. Before that time, and

long afterwards until these animals became plentiful in all the Western country, the Indians used dogs as pack-animals. When moving camp they were made to carry heavy bundles of household, or, rather, "lodge-hold" things, and the hunters always made them lug in big packs of meat. Long before Sinopah was born, the Blackfeet had so many horses that the dogs were no longer used; but the people loved the animals and had many of them; some lodges as many as twenty-five or thirty. They were very tall and heavy, long-haired and broad-headed, and much of the color of the wolf, to which they were very closely related. At night when the wolves howled all around the camp, the dogs would answer them; and then the people would say: "Listen! They are talking to their brothers out there on the plain."

The mothers made pack-saddles for the dogs, and got them used to being packed and led by a rawhide strand. Then one day, when the children were playing in the timber back

of the lodges, they packed all the things they had made on two of the dogs, and fastened the small ends of fourteen slender pine poles to the saddle of the third dog, and made him drag them.

So, leading the dogs, they turned into the timber and soon came to where the children were playing. Sinopah was the first to notice them, and what he saw was so surprising that at first he could hardly believe his eyes, and stood staring with his little mouth wide open. And well he might; for except that they were packed dogs instead of packed horses, it was as if the women were moving camp. The first dog carried a small, new, and brightly painted parfleche, or rawhide pouch shaped like an envelope, on each side of its saddle, and piled on top, and firmly lashed with a stout rawhide rope, were several small blankets and buffalo robes. The second dog also carried two parfleches and a couple of robes, and tied on top of the pack was a small Hudson's Bay Company copper

kettle. Besides dragging the lodge poles, the third dog carried a bundle that looked like a small lodge skin, and that is just what it was.

Sinopah found his voice: "What is it?" he cried. "Oh, how funny; my dogs packed just like horses."

And then Lone Bull and Otaki began to dance around the dogs: "Oh, Sinopah! We know what all this is," they shouted. "Your mother and ours have given us a little lodge and everything to go in it."

"Ai! They speak truth, little one," his mother told him; "come, we are going to make camp for you. Now, where shall it be?"

"Let me lead the first dog and be chief," said Lone Bull. "I will go ahead and choose the place for the camp."

So the little procession started, each child leading a dog, the mothers following and laughing. They had worked long and hard for all this, and were very happy because the children were so excited and pleased.

Lone Bull, very quiet and solemn-faced now, led them under three large cottonwood trees near the edge of the river. "We will camp here," he said. "In this place the camp will be well sheltered from the wind. Out there on the plain is plenty of rich grass for the horses. Here is good water for all. Back of the bluffs there, the plain is covered with buffalo. The hunters will make big killings and the camp will be red with meat. Come, Sinopah, sit you down here with me while the women put up the lodge and get things in shape for the night."

The mothers laughed to hear him talking so wisely, and giving orders just as if he was a chief. They soon unpacked the dogs, little Otaki helping all she could. That was the way things were done by the Blackfeet. The women did all the work of packing and unpacking the animals, making camp and getting firewood and water. But they did not work too hard; not nearly as hard as most white women who have a family and no serv-

ants. The men rested when in camp and were waited on by the women; but they did their share of work: in good weather and bad they hunted to provide food for their own families, and for all the widows and orphans and the old and crippled people of the great camp. That, and herding horses, fighting the enemy, and making their bows and arrows, their shields and clothing, kept them generally busy.

When the dogs were unpacked and turned loose, the women tied four lodge poles together about two feet from the tips,—they were fourteen feet long,—and then set them up in the form of a square-based cone, after which all save one of the remaining poles were laid up in a circle, their tips resting in the crotches formed by the tips of the original four. The upper edge of the lodge skin was then tied to the remaining pole at the proper height, and with it raised at the back of the lodge. It was easy then to bring the side edges of the lodge skin around and fasten

them together in the front with wooden skewers. Lastly, the poles were pushed outward at the bottom until the skin set tightly over them.

The women then hung a curtain over the little round hole in front that answered for a doorway. The bedding of robes and blankets was carried in and made up in three couches. The parfleches, tightly stuffed with dried meat, dried berries, and pemmican, were taken in and laid open near the door, water was brought in the little kettle, and the work was done. It was a fine little lodge, the skin made of tanned elk hides and almost snow-white. At the base it was about ten feet in diameter, large enough for a dozen or more children to play in.

Although Lone Bull and Sinopah were playing chiefs, they could not carry it out to the end. Long before everything was fixed, they went inside and got in the way of the busy women, but the mothers did not scold them. A small fire was soon made in the

centre of the lodge, and when it had burned down to a bed of red coals some sheets of dried meat were quickly roasted on them. Never were there happier children than those three, sitting there in their own little lodge and eating the first meal in it. They at once began to plan their play for the next day, and at sundown were glad enough to go home with their mothers, leaving the big cotton-wood trees to guard their treasures during the night.

CHAPTER IV

SINOPAH'S ESCAPE FROM THE BUFFALO

THAT evening the chiefs of the tribe held a council and decided to move camp from the Marias River, where they then were, out to the Sweet-Grass Hills. These are three lone buttes about one hundred miles east of the main range of the Rocky Mountains, and right on the line separating Montana and the Canadian province of Alberta. There were then, however, no monuments to mark the boundary of the two countries. The line had not yet been surveyed. When the Blackfeet were told that the Americans — Long Knives — owned the country to the south of the Hills, and the English — the Red Coats — the land north of them, they only laughed, and said: "That is a mistake. Neither the Red Coats nor the Long Knives own any of this country. Away

back in the beginning of things our god whom we call Old Man, made the world, and the animals, and us. When he made this part of the world he saw that it was the best of all, and so he gave it to us. It is our land; the white people cannot have it."

When they said that, the Blackfeet did not know how many the white people were and how strong. Since that time their game has all been killed, and their lands have been taken from them by the white race.

But I must go on with my story.

Very early the next morning, the camp crier went through the great camp shouting that it was to be moved to the Sweet-Grass Hills. Almost as fast as he went the lodges came down behind him. The men drove in and caught the horses, the women packed them, and in a very short time the long column of riders, loose and packed horses was strung out, heading north across the big plain. There were so many people, so many horses, that the column was all of three miles

long. Most of the men and women were splendidly dressed in buckskin clothes, beaded and painted and fringed; and then the trappings of the horses, the queer pouches, sacks, and parfleches they carried, were also painted in bright colors, so that the whole procession was not unlike a rainbow snake moving out across the brown plain. It was a romantic and barbaric pageant of shifting color.

On this morning there was something new in the column. Along in the centre of it, behind the horses that carried White Wolf's lodge and packs, and his family, walked the three dogs, one behind another, loaded with the play lodge and the little packs. Most of the children of the tribe had not seen them working the day before, and now they came crowding close on their horses, very much excited, and wishing that they could have such an outfit. Right behind the dogs were Sinopah and Lone Bull and Otaki on their ponies, and they were very much pleased at all this attention.

"You must come and visit us when we set up the little lodge," they kept telling the other children, and all promised that they would do so.

"But here are many hundred little ones," Sinopah's mother told him. "They can't all get into the lodge."

"Some can come in one time, and some another," he replied; "and it is nice just to stand and look at the outside of it."

Sinopah was getting wise.

There had been so much hunting near the river that the game had been driven far out on the plains, and that was the reason the chiefs had decided to move to another camping-ground, where meat could be more quickly and easily killed by the hunters. It was about thirty miles across country to the Hills. For half that distance only a few old buffalo bulls and two or three bands of very wild antelope were seen. But when about ten miles from the middle butte the people could see thousands and thousands of buffalo

and other game close to the north, the east, and the west. Most of the men now rode ahead of the column to hunt. They could be seen chasing different herds of the buffalo on their swift, trained horses, and shooting them with guns and bow and arrows; and where they passed were left many of the big, brown, shaggy-haired animals lying dead on the plain, or standing all humped up on weakening legs, sorely wounded, and soon to tumble down and die. The sight made the hearts of the people glad; there would be plenty of fresh, fat meat, many rich tongues to roast for the evening meal; food for many, many days to come. The old men watched the chase with glistening eyes, and became so excited that many of them pounded their safe, slow horses with heels and quirt, forgetting for the moment that they could not be made to go faster than an ambling trot; and so they fell to talking of what big hunts they had made in their young days.

To the east the hunters who had gone in

that direction rode out of sight behind a low ridge on the plain and chased a herd of several thousand buffalo. At first the animals ran eastward, but the wind was from the west and as they always ran against it, they soon circled and came thundering over the ridge and straight toward the long column of the moving camp. The hunters saw the danger in that, but could not turn them. The women and then the children began to shriek and cry, the old men to shout and try to drive a part of the column forward, the other part back, so as to save them from being gored and trampled by the frightened and wildly rushing herd. It was a terrible sight, that resistless mass of huge and sharp-horned animals coming straight for the centre of the column of traveling people. The leaders of the herd, the swiftest of the cows, had of course by this time smelled the riders, but they were now powerless to stop or to turn back, for the closely packed herd behind was pushing them; they had to keep going or be trampled to death.

Sinopah's Escape from the Buffalo

The old men had now succeeded in dividing the column by a little gap, and were driving the women and children and the pack-animals to the north and to the south, crowding them and widening the gap as fast as possible. The confusion increased. The horses squealed and kicked one another, and some of the frightened pack-animals ran away, scattering their loads along the plain. A few old women, regardless of danger, rode bawling after them in hope of recovering their little keepsakes and treasures.

When the column was separated by a clear space of several hundred yards, the buffalo began passing through it, on each edge so close to the people that the wind caused by their rush could be felt, and their black, angrily gleaming eyes could be plainly seen. The noise of their thudding and rattling hoofs and clashing horns was terrific.

Sinopah and his mother were right at the north edge of the gap. His little pony, always very gentle before this, now began to

get frightened and show signs of running away; and before any one could prevent it, it bolted straight out toward the passing buffalo.

"Oh, my boy! My little boy! Save him!" his mother shrieked, and madly whipping her horse, and without thought of the danger, took after him.

Other women shrieked and called for help. The old men there yelled and followed after the mother, resolved to save her and the boy, and half crazed because of the slowness of their horses.

Sinopah never once cried out or looked back. The people watching saw his little mouth tightly shut, saw him gripping the saddle with both hands, and they yelled to him to let go; to fall off. And at the same time they knew that it was useless to shout to him, for even a clap of thunder would have been lost in the roar and clatter of the passing herd.

It was only a few yards across the clear

space to the edge of the stream of buffalo. As the pony ran he seemed to go faster and faster. The people watching lost all hope, and so did the mother and the old men; but without a thought for themselves they only whipped their horses the harder and pressed on.

The pony now had only a few more jumps to make in order to reach the buffalo, but, excited as he was, still, from force of habit he was watching out for safe footing. So it was that when almost on the point of hitting a badger hole he suddenly jumped sideways to save himself; jumped as quickly as a cat could have done, at a right angle to his course. Sinopah was not prepared for that, he was only bracing himself for straight-ahead running, and so when the pony jumped sideways he was jerked loose from all holds. His little body actually flew out of the saddle, went spinning through the air, and down he came to the ground on his feet, then fell, and went rolling over and over on the short, thick grass, and almost into the stream of

buffalo. The pony kept on. As he came to the herd the animals shrank and made way for him; he entered the gap and in an instant it closed and he was lost to sight.

Sinopah's mother reached him almost as soon as he stopped rolling. Jumping from her horse, she snatched him up from the ground and ran back as fast as she could go, thinking no more of the horse nor caring what became of it. One of the old men caught the animal and turned it over to her later. Just as she got back to the people the last of the long herd of buffalo passed, and the thunder of their hoofs soon died away. She set Sinopah down on his feet and looked at him, felt of him, all the men and women and children there crowding around. Sinopah was not crying, nor laughing: just then his father came up on a big horse all covered with foam, and he cried out to him: "Nina, awt-sim-o-ta no-tas. Nok-o-twe-in-is." (Father, my horse ran away. Go get him.)

HIS LITTLE BODY ACTUALLY FLEW THROUGH THE AIR

Every one laughed then, and White Wolf was quickly told what had happened. Very gently he reached down and drew Sinopah up on the saddle in front of him: "I am not surprised that the boy escaped," he said. "I feel that the gods are good to this son of mine. I am sure that they intend him to live to great age."

CHAPTER V

THE CLAY TOYS

THE hunters had killed several hundred buffalo in the chase, so the chiefs ordered camp to be pitched right there beside a small prairie lake, and for five days the people were busy stretching and curing the buffalo hides, and cutting the tons and tons of meat into thin sheets and drying it.

That first evening by the lake there was much talk about the narrow escape of Sinopah. A number of instances were recalled where the end had been different.

"I remember a day away back in my youth, when Chief Three Suns lost his little girl in just such a way," said Red Crane. "Horses are uncertain animals. They don't have much sense at any time. You all know how often they go crazy with excitement.

That was just what happened to Sinopah's pony to-day. The passing of that great stream of buffalo, their swift running, the thunder of their hoofs, all was too much for his little brain. He just could n't help running too; some strange attraction there was which caused him to go right into the herd and run with it.

"Well, about this little girl: The hunters had chased and killed many buffalo and the women were at work skinning the animals and cutting up the meat. The little girl sat on her pony watching her mother cut up a big fat cow, when over the hill came a big herd of buffalo that had been feeding at a distance, had seen the other herd running, and now were running to join it. The animals came close in passing, and suddenly the pony went crazy and ran to join them. Too late the mother ran to grasp its trailing rope. The little girl was tied fast in her saddle, so she could not fall out of it if she tried to. In about the distance of a bowshot that pony was right

in front of the rushing buffalo, and they, running faster, soon closed in around it. Once in a while we could see the little girl's head above the shaggy backs of the great animals as her pony jumped along with them; and then suddenly, a huge bull stuck its head under the pony and tossed it and the little girl high in the air. Down they came on the backs of other buffalo, and that was the end for them. There was mourning in the camp that night, and for many a moon afterward in the lodge of Three Suns."

Sinopah had not shown much interest in his grandfather's story, and now that it was ended he wriggled out of his mother's arms and going over to his father, said: —

"But my horse is not dead, father; it ran away with the buffalo. I want you to find and bring him back to me."

"That I shall not do," the chief grimly answered. "I forbid any one in this camp to bring it in. 'T is an animal of crazy head and evil heart. Here, now, I give it to the sun,

also the saddle that is on its back. Mother, make a new saddle for the boy. In place of the pony, I give him that gentle old black-and-white pinto to ride."

"But I have my own horses; plenty of them," Sinopah objected. "Let me ride one of them."

"Not until you are much older," his father answered. "They are all wild and too strong-mouthed for your little hands to guide."

As soon as the meat was dried, the people moved on to the middle butte of the Sweet-Grass Hills, and from there through the gap to Milk River, which runs past the northern slope of the small range. The lodges were set up in the edge of the timber bordering the stream, and the play lodge of the children was placed under some big trees close to the water. The tribe remained here for several moons. With their mothers to watch them, and often Grandfather Red Crane, Sinopah and Lone Bull and Otaki passed the

long days playing in and around the little lodge. They had crowds of guests, children coming from all parts of the big camp to join in their sports.

A favorite game of Blackfeet children, and one as old as the tribe itself, was the making of clay images of the different animals of the country. Not all clay was good for this purpose, some of it falling apart, or cracking, as soon as it dried. The best was dark gray in color, very fine-grained, and tough when mixed with a few drops of water to about an ounce of the material. Grandfather Red Crane discovered a foot-thick deposit of this good clay in a riverbank near the play lodge and called the children: "Come over here, all of you," he shouted; "here is image earth in plenty. Now I want to see which one of you can make the best buffalo."

With Sinopah and his two chums were a dozen other children. At the call of the old man, they all ran to him and with sticks and sharp stones began digging out lumps of the

clay; pieces from the size of a hazelnut up to that of a hen's egg. These were angular in shape and very hard and tough, but that did n't matter. Each child found a good-sized, flat, smooth rock, and on it mashed the clay lumps to fine powder with a smooth hand-stone. The longer the stuff was pounded, the more flour-like it became, the better it would be for making the images. Some of the children were in such a hurry to start making these that they did n't half pound their clay, and afterwards their work cracked and fell to pieces.

Sinopah had never before played this game, so Grandfather Red Crane sat beside him and directed the work. It was work, hard work, the pounding of the clay, and the perspiration dripped from his forehead as he kept on until it was very fine. It was done at last, and the old man gathered it in a flat heap in the centre of the flat rock. They were sitting right at the edge of the river, and dipping his fingers into the water he sprinkled the clay two or

three times, and then began kneading it, just as a cook does flour for bread.

"Put your hand into it; feel of it," old Red Crane told Sinopah every few minutes, and the boy kept doing so.

At first the clay was very sticky, large portions of it hanging to his fingers; and although the stuff had been pounded very fine, it felt coarse and lumpy.

"Now here is where a big mistake is often made," said the old man. "The clay feels as if it needed a lot more water, and if you were working it, you would surely sprinkle on too much. Really the stuff is almost wet enough. Now see: I put on just a few drops more, and now I work it a long time."

This time the old man kneaded it steadily for as much as five minutes. Then he patted it down into a flat cake and ran the palm of his hand across it several times, making a smooth, dull polish on the surface. Then he pinched off a small portion and worked it with the fingers of both hands. The clay was

now of just the tough softness of putty as the glazier uses it for setting window panes. "There! it is just right," said the old man. "Mind that you do not ever make the stuff any softer."

By this time all the other children had prepared their clay and were busily shaping out images of the buffalo. The older ones were quite skillful modelers and soon had two or three made and standing on the bank in front of them. Watching them, Sinopah began his work, taking a lump of the clay as large as he could hold in one hand and trying to shape it. He pinched and pulled, rounded and flattened the stuff for a long time, but could not get it to look like a buffalo or any other animal.

Grandfather Red Crane sat beside him, smoking his long pipe and saying not a word. Very often Sinopah would sigh, stop work, and look beseechingly up, and getting no offer of help, make another trial. And so it went on for a long time. Quite often the

old man muttered some words, but the boy did not hear. He was praying; praying to the sun: "O great one! O you maker of the day and ruler of the world!" he kept saying; "give this boy of ours an enduring heart. Give him a brave heart. Give him the will to strive and keep striving for that which he wants."

And then, laying aside his pipe, he reached over and took the shapeless lump of clay from Sinopah. "You have done your best," he said; "I will now show you how to make an image."

He made a roll of the clay so that it was much larger around at one end than at the other, and then pressed it somewhat flat. "The buffalo is very tall in front," he said, "and quite low in his hindquarters, so we will fashion his high hump and his big head out of the large end of the clay."

He worked as he talked, pressing and squeezing and pushing the mass of stuff with thumbs and fingers, and in a very few min-

utes fashioned a very lifelike body of a buffalo. Then he found a slender dead branch of willow and broke from it four pieces for the legs, and stuck them into the body in their proper place. This made the model look very queer, standing as it did on pipe-like, wooden legs. But the old man was not done with the work. He next took more clay and covered the legs with it, fashioning the stuff on the sticks, covering them with it completely so that they very closely resembled the legs of the living animal. Much pleased with his success he set the little buffalo down before Sinopah and said: "There is a buffalo for you, my son; now let us see how good a one you can make."

Sinopah was very proud of the gift. He shouted to the other children to come and look at it, and they crowded around him bringing the animals they had made. Not one of them was so good as that modeled by the old man, and with fresh clay they began at once to try to do better work. The first

buffalo that Sinopah made was not a good one, but at least it had the shape of one in a rough way. It was plain enough that he had tried to make a model of that animal. Old Red Crane, smoking his long-stemmed stone bowl pipe, sat close by all the morning and encouraged him; the boy made one model after another, improving each time. By the time the sun was straight above in the sky he had made seven little buffalo images, and the last one was a very fair likeness of the great shaggy beast of the plains.

It was now the middle of the day and the children were very hungry, but they were so interested in making clay buffalo that they would not go home to eat. Their mothers had thought of their needs, however, and coming very quietly to the play lodge under the trees, they built a small fire in it, and broiled plenty of fresh fat meat over the coals. Then they called the children and old Red Crane, and what a feast they all had. It was very simple fare; just meat, and a

handful of dried service berries for each; but none of them wanted anything else; not even salt. Since the very beginning of things the Indians had lived on meat and a few berries, fresh or dried. It was the white man who taught them to have other wants.

After eating their fill, the children hurried back to the river and commenced modeling again. Now that they had numbers of clay buffalo, they made other animals; deer, bears, elk, bighorn, wolves, beavers, horses, antelope, and mountain goats. Along late in the afternoon each child had a really lifelike set of these. Grandfather Red Crane, still with them, said several times that it was time for the little ones to go home, but still they lingered, finishing just one more animal. They had eyes for their work only, but the old man was always looking about him, up and down the river, and across at the bluffs on the north side of the valley. Naught moved, or flew, or swam but what he saw it.

So it was that he saw the bushes trembling and shaking a little way upstream from where he and the children sat, and he knew that this was not caused by the wind. He sat very still and watched. He wondered what it could be that was coming toward them.

Presently he saw a small, black-eyed face peering through the leafy branches at the edge of the thicket. Then another, and another, and he knew one of them, the face of Weasel Tail, a boy who lived at the upper end of the big camp. "Ah-ha! he is the leader of the boys up there," he thought, "and has come to raid my children here."

But he said nothing, and watched and waited. And then, suddenly, with loud cries, little Weasel Tail sprang out of the brush, leading a dozen other whooping youngsters, and the whole band came skurrying down the shore and fell upon the little group of clay image-makers.

Then what fierce excitement and strug-

gling and wrestling took place for possession of the toys. The little girls, of course, shrieked, and cried, and ran homeward for protection. But the boys of both parties just struggled with one another. Sinopah was tackled by an upper camp boy of about his own age, and over and over they rolled on the gravel almost into the water. Then the boy quickly sprang up, seized all the images he could, and ran away whence he had come, all the others of the band going too and carrying away nearly all the images that had been made.

Through it all, old Red Crane had sat quietly laughing, and letting the struggle go which way it would.

Now that it was all over, Sinopah ran over to him and asked: "Grandfather, why did you let those upper camp boys take our animals?"

"Because they earned them," the old man replied. "That was the game. It was war. Those boys were your enemies and they con-

quered. It is now your turn. You must go and raid them. No, not to-day. You all must send scouts to watch their play, and sometime you will have a good chance to get as good as they took from here."

CHAPTER VI

THE STORY OF SCARFACE

THE children of the upper end of the camp kept the clay animals they had captured just two days, and then they in turn were surprised by Sinopah's older comrades and lost them, and a number of their own toys also. In this encounter a boy of each party got very angry and hurt one another in the rough scramble. That evening when their fathers came home from hunting there was much talk about the trouble; it was very, very seldom that Blackfeet children quarreled and came to blows, and Red Crane and several other old men were called to decide what had best be done.

In the morning all the children of the camp were called together and Red Crane gave them a short talk:—

"My little ones," he said, "every day you

are growing taller and stronger and will soon be strong men. The Blackfeet will soon depend upon you to fight the enemy, and they are all around us, and to keep our great plains and the herds of game upon them for our own use: that is one reason why you must never quarrel with one another. If you quarrel when you are children, you will quarrel with one another when you are older; it is only by being all brothers, as it were, by loving one another and standing by one another, that you can keep the tribe from being conquered by its many enemies. Another reason is that the great Sun himself forbids it. Now, promise, all of you, that there shall be no more of this."

"We take your words!" "We will quarrel no more," they shouted in answer, and were soon off to play again.

That evening, when the family were all sitting around the lodge fire, Sinopah rolled across the couch into his father's arms and asked: "Who is the Sun? How can he tell

us what to do? Who is Old Man to whom I hear you praying?"

"I am glad you asked," White Wolf replied. "It is time for you to know all about these things and to begin praying with us. Listen, now, and I will try to make you understand.

"In the beginning was no one but Old Man. He was the same as any of us except that he had yellow hair, blue eyes, and a white skin, and had very powerful medicine which enabled him to do great things. The time came when he thought he would like to have a world, so he made this one. He made it flat, with a straight down-cut edge all around it. But that did n't suit him, so in different parts of it he made a lot of running jumps, and at every jump a mountain arose under him. Then from the mountains he cut gashes in the plains, and wherever he cut, valleys were formed and creeks and rivers ran in the bottom of them. This looked good enough for the world, and so he then made

living things on it: people, animals, and all the grasses and things that leaf.

"But when Old Man made the people he gave them paws instead of hands, so they were quite helpless and at the mercy of the bears and all other animals; whenever they wanted to, the animals killed and ate the people.

"Old Man was so busy going here and there inspecting the world, and the things he had made, that it was some time before he saw what was going on. When he did notice it, he sat down on a big rock and scratched his head many times and thought a long time before he knew what to do. He then called all the people to him and slit down their claws, so that they became fingers and thumbs, with which the people could do all kinds of work. He showed them first how to make bows and arrows, stone knives and arrow-points, and then taught them how to shoot and kill and cut up the animals. Lastly, he gave them fire with which to cook the meat

and keep themselves warm. Since that time we have been more and more the masters of the world. Better than all the other tribes he made, Old Man liked us Blackfeet. He saw that this part of the world was the best part, and so he gave it to us with all its many kinds of game.

"Away back in those first days the Blackfeet had much to learn. It was the fault of a woman that caused sickness and death. The first person to get sick was a little baby. The mother took it to Old Man and asked why it cried; why it refused to eat?

"'It is sick,' he told her, 'and it may die.'

"'Die? What is that?' the woman asked.

"'It is what happens to an animal when men shoot it with their arrows,' Old Man replied. 'They cease to breathe, the heart stops beating, that is the end of them.'

"'But my child must not die,' the woman cried. 'You made us; you are powerful; I pray you to keep it from dying.'

"Old Man stood silent a long time. They

were at the edge of a river. At last he said to her: 'Woman, it shall be as you say about this. Now here is a stone, and here is a piece of wood. I will throw into the water which one of them you choose. If it floats, then your child and all the people shall live forever; if it sinks, then all of you and those yet to be born must die from one cause and another.'

"Old man had picked up the rock and the piece of wood while talking, and he now held them out. 'Choose the one I shall throw,' he told her.

"The woman stood staring at the two things a long time, and the longer she looked at them the more frightened she became; and at last she cried: 'Throw the rock!'

"Old Man did as he was told; the stone struck the water with a big splash and sank; the baby died in its mother's arms right there. Death had come to the people by a woman's unwise choice.

"For a long time after that, whenever a

person became sick he soon died. The people had not yet learned about different medicines, and other ways for curing sickness. Nor could they get help from Old Man: he had told them all good-bye and gone into the West, his last words being that at some far future time, when they desperately needed him, he would return. Day after day they now cried out for him, and in vain.

"A number of winters came and went, and all the time the people kept dying in great numbers. At last a young man who had a big scar on his face set out to visit all the animals, hoping that some one of them might tell him how to get rid of the scar. He traveled on and on for several moons, visiting in turn the bear, the beaver, the wolf, and all the others of the country. In those days all of them could talk.

"'O my brother!' he said to the bear, 'I have heard that you have great medicine: I beg you to have pity and remove this scar from my face.'

"'I am sorry, but I have n't the power to do that,' the bear replied. 'Now there is the beaver; he is the wisest of all us animals; I advise you to see him about this.'

"But the beaver could not remove the scar. He advised the young man to call on the badger; the badger sent him on to the wolf; and so it went until Scarface had seen them all. Then he gave up all hope, and at last, arriving at the shore of a great lake, lay down on the sands to die.

"Then it was that two swans came swimming close to the shore where he lay crying, and asked what was his trouble. Scarface told them, and when he had ended the swans said: 'Brother, do not despair: one there is, greater than all you have asked for help. His home is out there on an island; you must go to him.'

"Scarface rose up and looked out on the great lake, and could see nothing but the blue water extending to the very rim of the world. 'There is no island,' he said

mournfully, and sat down on the sand. 'Oh, why did you put false hope in my heart? Go, now, and let me die in peace.'

"'But we told you truth, brother,' the swans replied. 'Truly, an island is out there, but so far it cannot be seen from here. We pity you; we wish to help. Come now and lie down on our backs and we will carry you to the sacred island. Never yet has any man of this world stepped foot on it.'

"Scarface looked at the swans, at the lake, and then, reaching for his bow and arrows, which he had thrown away when he lay down to die, he went and lay down on the backs of the big birds. 'It matters not where I die,' he thought. 'It may as well be out on that great blue water as here on this sandy shore.'

"The swans were big and strong, their backs made a soft couch. While they swam steadily and swiftly westward on the deep waters Scarface slept. When he awoke they were nearing a big island, and presently,

having come to shallow water and near the shore, they told him to get off. 'This is the place,' they said, 'and yonder behind that grove of trees lives the great one'; and with that they turned, and rising on their powerful wings flew away in the direction whence they had come.

"Scarface waded ashore and right on the beach met the most beautiful youth he had ever seen. His clothing was of soft, white, tanned skins embroidered with quill-work of rainbow colors.

"'You are welcome here,' said the youth. 'I will tell you my name: it is Morning Star. My father is the Sun. My mother is the Moon. We live here on this island.'

"Scarface then told who he was, and why he had come to this far place. Morning Star said that he had come to the right one to help him.

"'But, brother,' he added, 'before going to our lodge I want you to do something for me. Out there on that rocky point live

a tribe of big, sharp-billed birds. One by one they have killed my brothers, and I am forbidden to fight them. I want you to go and kill them for me.'

"Scarface did not have to be asked twice. He strung his bow, ran out on the point, and began to shoot the wicked birds. They came at him with loud, harsh cries and tried to stab him with their bills, and one by one they fell around him until all were dead. Then the two young men cut off their scalps and carried them to the Moon. She was a beautiful woman and was dressed in strange and gorgeous garments. When Scarface was made known to her she hugged and kissed him, and then wept. 'I cry from thinking of my dead sons,' she said. 'You have avenged their death; you have killed those wicked birds, so now I take you for my son.'

"She then took Scarface into her beautiful big lodge and gave him choice food. It was now almost night, and soon the Sun came home from his daily task of giving

light and heat to the world. When told what Scarface had done, he gave him kind greeting. 'Young Blackfeet,' he said, 'you have done much for us this day: remain with us for a time and I will do something for you.'

"Scarface did stay there a long time. Every night the Sun taught him sacred songs, and over and over showed him different kinds of plants that were cures for different kinds of sicknesses. Also he said that he was the ruler of the whole world and that people must pray to him for what they need. And that they must love one another, and not lie or steal. That they must be very kind to the old people, and the widows and orphans.

"And then, one night, the Sun rubbed a powerful black medicine on the young man's face which removed the scar. Then loading him with many beautiful presents he led him out of the lodge, the Moon and Morning Star following Before them stretched the Wolf's

Road,[1] and the Sun pointed to it. 'There is your trail,' he said. 'Follow it and you will arrive at the camp of the Blackfeet. Do not forget that you are to teach them all that I have taught you.'

"At that the Moon and Morning Star wept, and so did Scarface, for he had learned to love them as much as they did him. Tears almost blinded him as he started out on the shining trail that mounted before him far up into the sky. On and on he followed its straight way, and at last came to the lodges of the people.

"So it was, O Sinopah, that the people got help in time of sickness and trouble. That shining Maker of the Day is our greatest god and you must ever pray to him, and make him presents."

That night the little boy sat by the fire a long time and thought about all he had heard. Then he went to the doorway of the

[1] The Wolf's Road, Mah-kwi Ok-so-kwi, is the constellation of stars we commonly call the Milky Way.

lodge and old Red Crane pointed out the Wolf's Road. He thought that he would try to climb it some day when he grew to be a man.

CHAPTER VII

THE BUFFALO TRAP

THE leaves of the cottonwoods along the stream were falling; high up in the blue sky geese and swans and ducks were honking and trumpeting and whistling and quacking as they winged their way southward toward the land of Us-kus-sai Ne-po-yi: always summer. Milk River was not a good place to winter, because there was nowhere along its upper stretches much fuel; so the chiefs held a big council one day to decide where the cold season should be passed. After a whole afternoon's talk it was found that most of them preferred the upper Two Medicine River, and there the camp was moved after a couple of days' travel. The lodges were set up in a very heavily timbered bottom that was sheltered

on the north by a high sandstone cliff several miles long.

This place the Blackfeet called the Piskan, or, as we would say, "The Trap": for here they were wont to decoy and kill — when everything was right — a whole herd of buffalo at one time. The last time the tribe had been there, Sinopah was so young that he did not know what was being done, but since then he had heard of the wonderful way in which the animals were there lured to their death, and he was very anxious to see it all.

After the camp was well settled, preparations were made for decoying or trapping a herd of buffalo. Only a few men in the whole tribe were able to do this, and so they were believed to have great "medicine": that is, mysterious power given them by the gods. One of these men was White Wolf, the father of Sinopah.

White Wolf came into his lodge one evening after a visit to the other chiefs, and said

to old Red Crane: "There is not much meat left in the lodges: we have decided that it is best to try to make a big killing to-morrow; you are asked to decoy a herd."

"Hah! That all depends on many things," the old man answered. "There must be a herd in the right place out there on the plain; the wind must not be in the south; and my medicine has to be right, else I will fail to do the work. I will begin now, however, and try my best to bring meat. Send the camp crier around at once to notify the hunters to sing the coyote song before they sleep."

Old Four Bears was the camp crier. As soon as a horse could be saddled he mounted it and rode among the lodges from one end of the camp to the other, shouting: "Listen! Listen, O ye hunters. If all be right, Red Crane will bring meat tumbling down over the cliff to-morrow. Pray then to the gods for success; sing, all of ye, the lucky hunter's song, the song of the coyote — greatest hunter of all; sing it this night before you sleep."

As he went his way, prayer and song were started in every lodge, and within a short time several thousand men's deep voices were intoning prayers and quavering the strange, staccato tune of the song. Powerful and weird was the sound of it all in the still, frosty night. Outside the lodges the dogs sat up on their haunches and howled; and from beetling cliffs and the far reaches of valley and plain the wolves joined in with long-drawn, melancholy cry. Had you been there, as I was, you too would have been strangely affected by it all. It was a very solemn and sacred time: men, women, children, even the very animals, were united in beseeching their gods for food.

Sinopah sat very quiet and wide-eyed watching his grandfather. The old man first got out his paint-bag and rubbed reddish-brown ochre, color best loved by the gods, on face and hands; then he sang the coyote song; and lastly, having filled and lighted a pipe, blew smoke toward the four corners

of the earth, toward sky and ground, and prayed.

"Hai-yu, all-powerful Sun! Hai-yu, Old Man! Hai-yu, thou little under-water creature," he began, "have pity on us and give us food. I pray you to give me power to bring much food to all your children here."

And so he went on, praying and singing for a long time. Before the old man finished, Sinopah became very sleepy, but kept his eyes wide open and would not lie down: there was something in that prayer he wanted to know about:

"Grandfather," he cried, when the old man was done, "you prayed also to a little under-water creature. What animal is that — a mink — a muskrat — and is it very powerful?"

Red Crane reached over and took the boy in his arms: "Little one, that is the one thing I may not tell you," he replied. "The little animal is my medicine; my dream animal. Like all other Blackfeet youths, and as

you must do some day before you are grown and start out to war, I went away from the camp by myself and fasted many days and nights in order to get a vision; that is, to get a medicine, a secret helper to guide me safely through the dangers of life.

"From long fasting my body became weak, and at last it slept soundly. Then it was that I — my shadow — left the body and traveled far, and asked all whom I met for help. It was while I lay by the side of a stream that this certain little creature came up out of the water and sat on the shore near me. 'I heard your call for help,' it told me, 'and I have come to help you. When you pray to the Sun and Old Man, pray also to me and I will be your friend, your helper, coming often to you when your body sleeps and telling you what to do, and what not to do. But you must never tell any one my name.'

"So it was, little Sinopah, that I got my medicine, my secret helper. I am old; I

have been through many battles; through dangers of all kinds; and have suffered no harm. And many, many times this little under-water creature has come to me in my dreams and given me warnings. Truly, it is a powerful secret helper that I have."

"Grandfather, when can I go fast and get my medicine?" Sinopah asked when the old man had finished.

"Oh, not for a long time. Not until you have seen sixteen or eighteen winters," he replied.

And then, tucked under warm, soft buffalo robes by his mother, the boy almost at once fell asleep.

The next morning every one was up before sunrise and ready for the trapping of the buffalo. Some young men had slept out on the plains back of the cliffs, and hurrying into camp they reported that a band of five or six hundred of the animals were grazing on the second ridge north of the valley. Old Red Crane said that his dream had been favor-

able. He tossed up a feather, found that the wind was from the northwest, and gave orders for the people to go to the rock-piles. In a few minutes several hundred men and women, girls and boys, were climbing a trail out of the valley at the lower end of the cliffs. They went on foot, Sinopah's father leading him and helping him up over the hardest places. Not until all of the climbers had reached the top of the cliff, and disappeared out on the plain, did old Red Crane start. He rode a small, swift horse that was covered with a buffalo robe, and himself wore a robe of the same kind. He went some distance down the valley and climbed out of it by an easy, sloping trail.

Meantime Sinopah, with his father and the other people, had come to the top of the cliffs at their eastern end, and then turned westward along the edge of them. After walking a half-mile or more, they came to where they were highest and steepest, there being in that place a straight drop of more

than a hundred feet to the boulder-covered slope below. Here on top of the cliff, a little way back from the brink and a hundred yards apart, began two ever-widening rows of rock-piles that extended out on the plain for more than a mile like an enormous letter V. Beyond them was a low ridge, and still farther north another ridge, on which a large herd of buffalo were feeding.

White Wolf now turned to the people and told them to hurry and conceal themselves behind the piles of rock, and they scattered out along the two lines of the V, one or two and sometimes three people stopping and lying down beside each pile. Sinopah was very impatient: he kept jerking his father's hand and asking questions, but for what seemed to him a long time the chief would not answer.

At last not one person was to be seen out there on the plain: nothing was in sight but the rows of rock-piles, and far away the black mass of feeding buffalo. Then White Wolf

lifted the boy up on his shoulder and began to explain: "Pretty soon you will see your grandfather riding out toward that first ridge," he said, "so watch for him."

Sinopah looked for the old man; looked so hard that water came to his eyes and he had to wipe it away. When he looked off again, he saw what appeared to be a small, single buffalo climbing the first ridge out toward the buffalo herd. His father told him that the object was his grandfather on horseback. The old man was lying down on the animal, so as to make it appear that it had a high, humped back, and covered as both he and the horse were with buffalo robes, they did, indeed, together look like a small buffalo.

From the top of the ridge the plain extended out with an even rise to the next ridge, on which the herd was feeding. As soon as the old man reached it, he began to ride in circles, each time nearer and nearer those whose attention he sought to attract.

And quite often he tickled the horse between the legs with a stick, making it kick up its heels in a very funny manner.

"If you were there," the chief told Sinopah, "you would hear your grandfather making a very queer moaning sound — *m-m-m-ah! m-m-m-ah!* — just as a buffalo calf does when it is in pain, or is frightened."

"*M-m-m-ah! m-m-m-ah!*" Sinopah repeated. "I will learn to do that well," he said, and when I am grown up I will call the buffalo to the pis-kan."

"Well, then, watch! Watch closely: you are going to see a very strange thing pretty soon," his father told him.

At first the big herd of buffalo feeding on the far ridge paid no attention to the object circling toward them, thinking, no doubt, that it was one of their own kind just wandering around. But when it kicked up its heels, first one of the old bulls and then another raised its head and began to stare. Then, when it was close enough for its plain-

tive *m-m-m-ah* cries to be heard, the cows began to take notice, thinking that what they saw was a calf in distress. Several of them walked toward it a little way, sniffing the air, but the wind was wrong for them and their noses could get no scent of it.

"Now! Now watch closely, little son," said father, and the boy stared harder than ever.

One of the big cows suddenly started and ran forward a few rods, and the whole herd moved, too, and gathered in a close bunch behind her. Thus they stood for a few moments, staring and tossing their heads, and then, led by the big old cow, down the ridge they came with a tremendous rattle and thunder of hoofs, and raising a thick cloud of dust behind them.

This was what old Red Crane on his little horse had been praying for, and now he turned and rode swiftly toward the wide gap of the V-shaped rock-piles. And swift as he rode, the buffalo were swifter and gained on him steadily.

"Oh! Oh! They will catch up with him and trample him to death," Sinopah cried in terror.

"No, no, he is not in danger," his father answered; "watch closely now."

In a few minutes Red Crane rode within the V, the buffalo right after him, and soon the whole herd was in it, too. Then, as the tail end of the band passed rock-pile after rock-pile, the people lying behind the heaps sprang up and shouted, and wildly waved their robes. That scared the rear animals, that alone could see and hear the people, and they ran harder than ever, so crowding those in front to run faster and faster. The band was nearing the cliff now, and were almost on top of Red Crane and his little horse. Then it was that he suddenly turned and rode straight east between two of the rock-piles of that side of the great V. Turning to follow him, — the lead cows still thought they were running to the rescue of a calf in trouble, — the herd saw people

jump up from behind the rocks, and were now for the first time as badly frightened as were those in the rear. Quick as a flash they turned from that danger and headed west, only to be confronted with people rising from the rock-piles on that side of the V. Here, now, were people on each side, and people back whence they had come. But none were to be seen to the south, and southward they turned, running faster than ever in their great terror. Red Crane was now safe. Sitting on his dripping horse, he watched the animals go, and raised a prayer to the gods and his little secret helper, asking that the buffalo should keep straight on.

In the mean time White Wolf had run with Sinopah to the edge of the cliff, and several hundred yards east of the place where the two lines of the V came close together, and there the two waited to see the end of it all.

Here, now, was the most anxious moment and the greatest danger; the leaders of the herd might turn before coming to the cliff,

THEN IT WAS THAT HE SUDDENLY TURNED

trample the people behind one or the other of the rows of rock-piles, and so circle back to the plain in safety. But no! They kept straight on; and Sinopah, watching them with staring eyes and open mouth, was never so excited in his life: he felt as if he was going to burst from the dreadful danger of it all; the terrible thunder of hoofs; the wicked gleams of wild black eyes set in shaggy hair.

And now the leaders of the herd saw the edge of the cliff, and tried to stop and turn to one side. But those behind them could not see it and kept pressing forward with tremendous and irresistible force. There could be no stopping. The leaders were swiftly pushed off from the cliff, and following them went the living stream of the herd, whirling and whirling through the air, falling, falling from that sheer height, and crashing down onto the boulders at the foot of the cliff. Hundreds of the buffalo went over the ledge, and only the last end of the herd, just a few animals, turned at the last

moment and escaped through the people to the plain.

Most of those that went over the cliff were killed outright by the fall, and those only crippled were soon put out of their misery by the hunters down there. Then began the skinning of the animals and the cutting-up of the meat and carrying it to the lodges in the camp. When night came the work was all done and the people rested and were happy. Pretty soon the moon came up and old Red Crane took Sinopah outside. Over at the foot of the cliff wolves and coyotes and foxes were howling and yelping as they fed on the bones and bits of meat that had been left there. "Listen to our little brothers," he said. "It is a great feast that we are giving them this night."

In some such way in the long ago, our own ancestors used to trap their food. That was when they had no weapons but the bow and arrow and flint knife, and meat and wild berries were all they had to eat.

CHAPTER VIII

SPINNING TOP

WINTER was now come, but the people were very comfortable in their lodges in the Two Medicine Valley. After all, the winters are very mild on the plains close under the Rocky Mountains in Montana. Sometimes a blizzard swoops down from the north, bringing some snow and intense cold, but it seldom lasts long. Within a few days a Chinook wind comes out of the west, a wind that started from the Japan Current of the Pacific Ocean, eight hundred miles away, and this is so warm that it kills the blizzard and melts the snow. Sometimes, even in January, this wind is so very warm that it makes the air feel as if summer had really come. This is the way it usually is on the northern Montana plains in winter. But about once in twenty

years the north wind keeps the west wind back for a couple of months or more. Then the snow falls deep, and the thermometer stays away down below zero, and the animals and birds die by the hundred. At such a time I have seen more than a hundred antelope, a whole band, lying frozen to death on the plain.

This was a good winter; too good, the boys and girls thought, for they wanted the river to freeze over so they could play on the ice. So it was that one night when Sinopah was going to crawl into his warm buffalo-robe couch, he made a short prayer to Ai-sto-yim-sta, Cold-Maker. He was the god who lived in the north, and who made raids into the southland, hidden always in the swirling snow of the terrible blizzards he made.

"Hai-yu, Ai-sto-yim-sta," little Sinopah piped shrilly, "have pity on all of us children. Come quickly; come this night and make ice for us to play on."

His mother heard him and cried out to White Wolf: "Now what do you think this naughty boy is doing? He prays Cold-Maker to come and make ice for him."

"Is it so!" his father exclaimed. "Sinopah, come here. I have something to say. Now, listen!" he went on, when he had the boy close in his arms. "Cold-Maker is a bad god, and you must never pray to him to come. He is not like the Sun, the great giver of life; he is the giver of death. Many and many a one of our people he has done to death. You pray him to come and make ice. Well, away out there on the plains are many of our hunters. They are coming slowly toward camp; very slowly because their horses are carrying heavy loads of meat for the women and children, and hides to be tanned into soft, warm robes. Now, suppose that Cold-Maker does come; come now, this night? You will have the ice to play on, yes. But other children will have no fathers: they will be lying dead out on the plain."

"Oh, I did n't think of that," said Sinopah. "Cold-Maker is a bad god. I will never pray again to him. But I would like to have some ice."

"The ice will come soon enough," said White Wolf. "Now, go you to your robes and sleep."

It was not long after this that there would be heavy white frost on the trees and the grass in the early morning, and thin ice along the edge of the river in the still places. Little by little this ice thickened and crept out from the shore, so that White Wolf had to break it when he carried Sinopah with him for the daily bath. When the two of them plunged into the cold water they shivered and cried, "Ah-ha-ha-ha-ah!" and shrank from the feel of it; but oh, how good they felt, when back in the warm lodge. And then one morning when they went to the river, they found it frozen clear across, the ice so thick that White Wolf had to get a heavy piece of drift and break a hole in it for a bathing-place.

Spinning Top

"Oh, hurry! hurry!" Sinopah cried. "I want to get back to the lodge and put on my clothes, and come out here to play."

But his mother would not let him start out until he had eaten all of the fat meat on a roasted buffalo rib. Then, taking up his top and the whipper for it, away he ran to the river where nearly all the children of the camp were playing on the ice, nearly all of them spinning tops.

Sinopah had a fine top that his grandfather made for him from the tip of a buffalo bull horn. It was about three inches long, an inch or more in diameter, flat on the upper end, and dull-pointed. There was no string for it, as the spinning was done with a whip. This was a slender stick about two feet long, to an end of which were tied three or four fine buckskin strings about a foot and a half in length. The top was started spinning on the ice with the thumb and middle finger of the left hand, and then lashed frequently with the whip to keep it spinning.

A favorite play was for three or four children to start their tops at the same time, each one trying to make his top spin the longest.

As usual Lone Bull and the little girl Otaki, Sinopah's best friends, were with him this morning and the three spun their tops together, sometimes one and sometimes another of them winning the long-time game. Sinopah won most of the games, though, and he began to think that he could spin tops as well as any one of the great crowd of children there on the ice. When he had won three games, one after another, from Lone Bull and Otaki, he was sure that he was the best player of all, and said so.

Crow Foot, a boy older by some years, heard the boast and cried out: "You say that you are the best spinner here? Well, I say that I am the best. Come on, and we will see whose words are true. We will start spinning our tops at the same time, and the one of us who spins his longest shall win the other's top."

"Don't you do it, Sinopah," said Lone Bull. "He is bigger than you; he has spun tops two or three winters before we commenced; he will surely win your top."

"Yes, and such a nice top it is, and his only an old wooden one," said Otaki. "Don't play with him."

"Oh, I am not afraid; I can win," said Sinopah.

And in another moment the two boys were spinning their tops in the centre of a big crowd of children. No one spoke or moved; the only sound to be heard was the swish and slat of the whip-lashes, and the dull buzzing of the tops on the ice.

After a long time Crow Foot made a misstrike with his whip and the top wobbled. "He loses," the children cried; but no, he made another quick snatch at it and it righted up.

Then Sinopah's top spun into a small, rough place in the ice and began to jump. "Oh, Sinopah! be careful; take courage,"

the crowd shouted at him, and just then he made a hard stroke with the whip that knocked the top over on its side and sent it rolling into the crowd. Crow Foot snatched up his top, chased the other one and recovered it, and danced around holding both up in the air, shouting: "I win the bull-horn top! I win Sinopah's fine, black horn top."

Sinopah cried. Lone Bull and Otaki tried to comfort him, but he cried all the harder and kept saying: "Oh, my top! It is gone. What will my grandfather say? He worked so long to make it for me. Oh, I want my grandfather; maybe he will get it back for me."

Grandfather was right there; he was never far away from the boy, always watching to see that he came to no harm.

"Now, what is the trouble?" he asked; but Sinopah was crying so hard that he could not answer, and so Lone Bull told him how Crow Foot had won the top.

"Well, well. That is bad," said the old

man, and he led Sinopah away up the river, Lone Bull and Otaki going also.

"You must n't cry. No matter what happens, you must not cry," Red Crane began. "Women and girls may cry, but boys and men never."

"But, grandfather, my top! Crow Foot has it; he won it from me. Will you get it back for me?" Sinopah whimpered.

"I will not," Red Crane answered. "This is going to be a lesson to you. Remember this—you, too, Lone Bull: those who gamble are always poor. Also, gamblers are not good men: they use up so much time playing games that they seldom hunt, and their women and children have not enough meat to eat. Neither are they of any account in war. If all our men gambled, the enemy would soon kill us all off."

"But, grandfather, I have no top now," said Sinopah, doing his best not to cry any more, "and see how clear and hard the ice is. I want to spin a top on it."

"Well, if you are very good, and will promise never to gamble again, I will begin making you another top to-morrow," said the old man. "Now, you will all go with me after some red willow. I want the bark of it to mix with my tobacco. There is a fine patch of it growing close to the shore above here."

Never was there clearer ice than that on the river this morning. It was as clear as a glass window pane. Everything in the water under it could be seen plainly, the rocks, gravel, and sand of the bottom, and the trout lying almost still in the deep places.

While they stood looking down at a very large trout, suddenly a long, slender, dark brown animal with big, webbed hind feet, came swimming down into the deep hole. The trout saw it and turned and swam like a flash toward the branches of a sunken tree. The animal was a faster swimmer; it went so fast after the trout that it was just a brown streak in the water, and it caught the fish,

and, holding it crosswise in its mouth, started to swim back upstream.

"Ha! Am-on-is" (otter), "killer of fish," old Red Crane cried, and stamped on the ice.

That frightened the otter; it let go of the bleeding and dying trout and swam away downstream.

"O-kye-hai! You children down there," Red Crane shouted, "spread out and stamp on the ice. Scare back an otter swimming toward you."

There must have been all of a hundred children in the top-spinning crowd. The old man had to shout two or three times to make them understand, and then they all spread out and stamped the ice with their feet, and pounded it with their tops and whips, making altogether a terrible noise.

Old Red Crane, in the mean time, had gone to the shore and picked up a rock bigger than his head, and now he stood with it raised high above his head watching for the

otter to come back. This it soon did, the children below having scared it, and now it swam close to the shore where the bank went straight down, hoping to find an air-hole, or a beaver-hole into which it could crawl, and then climb up into the beaver's sleeping-place above the water, where there would be plenty of air.

There was no hole of any kind, except an open place in some rapids quite a long way above, and the otter had to breathe before it could get back to that place. Its lungs were full of air, and it had to let it out and draw it in again, or die. So when it was quite close under Red Crane, it rose to the under surface of the ice and blew out the air against it, a great long wide silvery bubble. But before it could breathe it in again, Red Crane dashed the rock down right over it. *Crash!* went the brittle ice, the jar scattering the big bubble into a hundred little bubbles, and frightening the otter away at the same time. There it was without air in its lungs, and no

way to get any except at the hole at the rapids, so far, far away. That place the poor animal tried to reach. It swam slower and slower, Red Crane and the children following it. Very soon it had to expand its lungs, and as there was no air, water instead flowed in through its nose and filled them. That was the end. The animal gave a few feeble kicks, then sank to the bottom of the river, and lay still. It was dead. Dead from want of that little bubble of air it had lost. Could it have kept that, letting it out against the ice, and then drawing it in again, it could have traveled for miles, or until it came to an open place where it could crawl out of the water.

Grandfather Red Crane was all excited now. "Who would have thought we would get a medicine animal so easy as that?" he said. "It was just lucky that it stopped to make its bubble in front of me. But it is a good sign. Sinopah, we will save the skin for you. When you grow up we will make a

bow-and-arrow case of it for you, and I know that it will bring you good luck in war."

And with that he sent the children to camp after an axe with which he chopped a hole in the ice. Then he fished out the otter with a forked pole. It was a big otter; all of four feet long from the nose to the tip of its tail. The old man forgot all about the red willow, and dragging the animal, and the children following, he went straight back to camp, where he carefully took off its fine furred hide and stretched it to dry in the right shape.

CHAPTER IX

SINOPAHS'S FIRST BOW

"IT is time for our son to learn to use the bow," said White Wolf one evening when all the family was sitting in the light and warmth of the little lodge fire.

"Ai! So it is," old Red Crane exclaimed. "I will begin work on one for him to-morrow, and it shall not be a wooden bow; it shall be made of horn."

"I would n't take so much trouble as that," said White Wolf. "A bow of wood will be good enough for him to begin with."

"But what does my time amount to?" Red Crane asked. "I am old, old. I tell you it makes me sick when I see the younger men start out to hunt, or leave to make war against the enemy, and I can't go with them. All I can do now is to stay here in the camp. All I can do is to teach our little Sinopah;

teach him to shoot and hunt; teach him to be good and kind and brave. My time is all for him. So it is that he shall have a fine little bow of horn."

"Father, don't you worry about these things," said White Wolf. "I can hunt for us all, and I can go to war. All I ask of you is to be happy. It is great work that you are doing for our little Sinopah. We are all glad that you do so much for him."

The next morning the old man went up in the hills with Sinopah to get some buffalo horns. They soon found the heads of some freshly killed animals, and took the horns from three of them, all big, shiny black horns of three- and four-year-old bulls. Back they went then to the valley and threw the horns into a hot spring, where they were to remain a couple of days and get soft.

On the third day old Red Crane took the horns out of the spring and found them so soft that they could be split with a knife as

easily as if they were just soft wood. So he took them home to the lodge and began making a bow, Sinopah watching every part of the work, and asking many questions about it, so that he could some day make such bows for himself.

First, the old man cut the horns into long splints of different size, the larger ones an inch wide, and a quarter of an inch thick. The larger pieces were for the middle of the bow, the smaller ones for the ends, and all were neatly shaved, so as to lap closely one on the other, — to splice, as such work is called; all the pieces being stuck together with a very strong waterproof glue made by boiling down the hoofs of the buffalo. When this was done, the old man scraped the bow with sandstone, and then a knife, until from end to end it was as smooth as glass, and of the right shape, heavy and thick in the middle, and from there tapering each way out to the tips. Lastly, to make the bow all the stronger, and springy, he glued strips of

sinew to its whole outer length, and wrapped it with sinew bands about four inches apart. When finished, the bow was about three feet long.

The next thing was to string the bow with a fine cord of twisted sinew, and then the arrows were made, the shafts of straight, hard, heavy greasewood, the points of thin iron bought from the traders, and the feathering of quills of wild-goose wings.

The old man made eleven of these iron-pointed arrows, and then went to work on another shaft with which he took especial pains, working a whole evening in just scraping and polishing it, and soaking it full of grease. Sinopah, watching him, grew restless, and asked why he worked so long on just one arrow shaft.

"Because this is to be a medicine arrow; a lucky arrow," Red Crane replied.

He then took from his own quiver an arrow that had a very small, thin, sharp point of black obsidian, or natural glass. In the

Yellowstone country there is a whole mountain of such stuff.

"Now, I am going to take this point off and fasten it on this shaft," said the old man, "and you are never to use it except when in danger. My father made the point for me, and three different times it has saved my life. By that you can see it is great medicine."

"Oh, grandfather! Tell me about it," said Sinopah, snuggling up to him and hanging onto his hand so that he could not work.

"Well, you shall hear," the old man answered, lifting the boy into his lap and smoothing the hair back from his forehead. "Ai! But the first time was long ago. Why, I was not much older than you are now. My father had made a horn bow and twelve arrows for me. Eleven of the arrows had common white flint points and the twelfth one carried this fine black one. Just as I tell you now, my father told me then: I was not to use it except when in great danger.

"One day I went hunting with two boy

friends. It was a very hot day and we walked in the timber close to the river. In my left hand I carried my bow and two arrows; one a common arrow, the other having this medicine point. All the rest of the arrows were in a quiver slung at my back.

"My two friends walked in the middle of the timber and near the river, and I kept at the outer edge of it. After a long time I came to a very thick patch of willows, so very thick that I could not see into it. In there I heard a queer noise; a snuffling noise, and little faint cries as of something in great pain, just such a noise as a dog makes when it is badly hurt. I thought it was a dog, one of our camp dogs, that had got hurt and had come out there to die. So I pushed into the thicket, and suddenly came face to face with a big wolf. Now, wolves, as you know, never harm any one. They are afraid of man. But this wolf was different. A big fluff of white foam covered its mouth, and by that I knew it was a mad wolf, and very dangerous. When

it saw me it raised up and made ready to jump at me, and at the same time I fitted the medicine arrow to my bow. The wolf opened its mouth and made ready to jump at me, and I shot the arrow right down its throat. It did jump, but never touched me. It fell almost at my feet and died, and I got back the arrow.

"The next time I used the arrow-point was some winters later. I had grown to be a man. I had taken the point off from the little arrow-shaft, and fitted it onto one such as men use. I had been running buffalo one day, and killed four with my common arrows. Then I shot a big, fat cow, and at the same time my horse fell and broke its leg. The cow was only wounded, and very mad. She charged me and I jumped to one side and fired a common arrow at her; it only stuck in her shoulder.

"Four times she turned and charged me, and four times I fired an arrow, but none of them did any good. I had but the one arrow

left, this one with the medicine point. I made a little prayer, fitted it to the bow, and then shot it when the cow turned to charge me again. Straight into her heart it went and down she fell, and I was saved."

"Yes, that makes two times; now tell about the last one," said Sinopah, for the old man had stopped talking and was looking with dreamy eyes at the fire.

"Oh, yes, the last time," Red Crane answered, sitting up straight again. "No. I will not tell you about that, because you might have bad dreams about it. All I can say is that I had a fight with a Crow chief and killed him with the medicine arrow."

Sinopah wanted to know all about the fight, but he had now become very sleepy, and was put on his couch before he had time to ask more questions.

On the next day old Red Crane made more arrow shafts, these being made sharp at the end, instead of having iron points. They were for shooting at marks, and for a long

time the old man made Sinopah practice with them every day. At first he shot them at little sagebrush bushes, or a piece of robe thrown onto a bush; but after a couple of moons he was taught to shoot at a ball of grass thrown up in the air. He became so skillful that he could pierce it nearly every time.

Then, one morning after the early bath in a hole cut in the ice, old Red Crane took Sinopah out to hunt with the real arrows. It was a very cold morning; the trees were covered with thick, white frost, and all up and down the valley they were popping with a noise like rifle-shots, while the ice on the river heaved and cracked with a rumbling like that of far-off thunder.

Not far below the camp they heard prairie chickens (sharp-tailed grouse) clucking, and presently saw a number of them sitting in a small cottonwood tree. The birds felt so cold that they sat all crouched on the tree limbs, and paid no attention to the man and boy approaching them.

"Well, you are close enough to them now," Red Crane told Sinopah when they had got so near that they could see the shiny black eyes of the chickens.

Sinopah dropped his robe then and fitted an arrow to his bow, one of the arrows with iron point, and took aim at a bird at the top of the tree.

"No, no! You must not shoot that one," Red Crane said, "for it would drop fluttering down among the rest and scare them all away. Shoot at the very lowest bird in the tree."

Sinopah took quick aim and let the arrow fly; and as the bow-cord twanged the chicken fell down from the limb with the arrow in it, and after a few flutters of its wings lay still on the blood-stained snow. Sinopah never said a word, but his snapping eyes showed how excited and happy he was as he shot another arrow at the next lowest bird in the tree.

This time he missed, but a third arrow

brought the chicken down, and three more arrows got two more birds. He was about to shoot at a fifth bird when Red Crane seized his arm: "That is enough," he said. "You have one for your mother, one for your father, one for yourself, and one for me. Remember this: the gods do not love wasters of life. They made the animals and birds for our use, but we may kill no more than we need."

Sinopah never forgot that. Afterwards, during all his life, he was careful never uselessly to take the life of beast or bird. Most of the white hunters of our country have not done that. They have killed the buffalo and deer, the pigeons and ducks and other birds, just for the fun of seeing them die. Had they shot only just enough for food, there would still be plenty of game from one end to the other of our great land.

Having picked up the four chickens, and the arrows that had been shot, the old man and the little hunter started back toward

home. Had you been in Sinopah's place, without mittens on that cold morning, you would have had your fingers frozen stiff. But he never felt the cold, and his hands were almost as active as on a summer morning. That was because he had to bathe in the frozen river every day.

On their way through the timber near camp they saw a cotton-tail rabbit sitting in the edge of a rose-brush thicket. "I would like to have it," said Red Crane, "but not unless you can kill it when it is running. Now, fit an arrow to your bow and see what you can do when I throw one of these chickens that way."

They were only forty or fifty feet from the rabbit. The old man tossed a chicken and the little animal started off on the jump through the snow, passing right in front of Sinopah. He aimed about a foot ahead of it, and *zip!* the arrow struck it fairly just behind the shoulder. It was a fine shot. Sinopah shouted as he ran to pick it up, and when

IT WAS A FINE SHOT

he returned and held the rabbit up before Red Crane, the old man shouted too and made a little prayer of thanks to the gods. "Never was there such a fine boy as this one you have given us," he said.

And at home he said to White Wolf: "Now, listen! Sinopah is going to be a great chief. I know that he is."

"I believe you," White Wolf replied. "I am very proud of him."

CHAPTER X

TRACKING A MOUNTAIN LION

NOW, while old Red Crane was teaching Sinopah to hunt and kill game with bow and arrow, Otaki's mother was teaching her to do woman's work. The little lodge had been set up for the children in the shelter of thick willow brush where the wind could not blow, and they now had many happy days in it. Lone Bull, Otaki's brother, was with them, and the two boys hunted, while Otaki gathered small pieces of deadwood for the fire, brought water from the river in a small pot, and did all the other work of the lodge, such as sweeping the hard, smooth earth floor with a broom made of a bunch of willow brush, and straightening out the soft robe couches.

Some days the boys would hunt a long time and come home to the little lodge with-

out anything. Other times they would bring in a couple of prairie chickens, or one or two rabbits. Arriving at the door of the lodge they would cry out: "Otaki, we have arrived. Come get the meat we have killed."

The little girl would then come out and say: "Kyai-yo! What a fine killing my hunters have made. Go inside now, and I will soon have meat on the fire."

Then, while the two boys sat on their couches before the fire and dried their wet moccasins, she took her little knife from the sheath dangling from her belt, and skinned and cleaned the rabbits or birds, then brought them inside and roasted them on the hot, bright-red coals. It is true that the meat did not taste so good as that of the buffalo and deer and elk and antelope that their fathers brought to camp, but they pretended that it was even better because they had killed it. They were very proud of being able to get their own food from the timber along the river. White children would not have liked

the chicken and rabbit meat that Otaki cooked, because she did not put any salt on it. The Indians never used salt before the white people taught them to put it in their food, and even to this day many of them do not care for it.

One day the two boys went away down the river, farther than they had yet gone on their hunts, and found three bullberry bushes still full of fruit. When first ripe, these berries are so sour that no one can eat them; but the freezing weather of winter turns certain of the acids into sugar, and then the berries taste something like currants, only very much better. They have both a tart and a sweet taste, and not only the Indians but birds are very fond of them, the prairie chickens especially.

When the boys found the three bushes, or rather small trees full of the fruit, the first thing they did was to strip off bunches of the ripe, red berries and eat them. They wondered how it was that the birds and the

women of the camp had not long since found and taken them all.

They soon ate all they could hold, and then said Lone Bull: "We should have all these berries for our lodge; there is a great quantity of them; enough to last us all winter."

"You talk wisely," Sinopah answered. "But of course gathering berries is not men's work. It is best that we bring Otaki up here to gather them."

"But she is n't strong enough for that," Lone Bull objected. "Of course she should come and help, but I think that we ought to get our mothers to do the work."

"Well, then, you go after them and I will stay here and keep any one who may come along from taking the berries," said Sinopah. "No one shall have them: they are our find."

At that Lone Bull started off on the run for camp. Sinopah ate a few more berries and then began to get cold from standing still so long. He started to walk around,

faster and faster, and farther and farther from the trees, and on a larger circle than ever came to some strange-looking tracks in the snow. They were big, round tracks, but not far apart; not near so far as he could step. Most of them showed the heel of the feet, so it was easy to see which way the animal had been going. He looked at the tracks a long time. "Now, if Grandfather Red Crane were only here, he could tell me what kind of an animal made these tracks," he said to himself.

Sinopah made another circle and once more came to the strange-looking tracks. "I do wish I knew what animal made them," he said. "Well, I will just follow them a little way and perhaps I can learn what it was."

The trail of the animal was away from the river and toward a sandstone cliff. Sinopah followed it through the timber. At one place the animal had stood on its hind feet and clawed the trunk of a cottonwood tree, scattering many small pieces of the bark

around on the snow. A little farther on, it had stood looking and listening for something, for here the snow was all packed smooth by its big feet. Still farther on, it had sat down in the snow, and had left the imprint of a long tail. By that Sinopah knew that this was not the trail of a bear, for bears' tails are no longer than a boy's hand.

"It is n't a wolf either," he thought, "for wolves have very bushy tails. The mark of this one in the snow looks as if it has very short hair. Why, it may be that I am following an otter."

Thinking that, he hurried forward on the trail and soon came near the sandstone cliff. Here there was not so much timber. The ground sloped sharply up to the foot of the cliff, and on it were scattered a number of large and small rocks. He could see the trail winding around among the rocks, and said to himself again, "It must be an otter's trail."

He did not stop to think that the tracks were ten times too large to have been made

by an otter. Nor did he know that an otter, when traveling through snow, does not walk: it lays its front feet back against its breast and pushes itself along with its hind feet, making a smooth trough in the snow with two dots in it at intervals, like this: —

* * * *

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Sinopah now began climbing the slope, and soon came to the very foot of the cliff. Right in front of him the trail ended at the mouth of a narrow low hole in the rock. He walked right up to it and tried to see in, to see the animal, but a few feet back there was nothing but the darkness of night. Then on the floor of the cave he saw some bones; big leg-bones and rib and backbones that looked like those of buffalo and deer, and he suddenly became scared. It was enough to scare any boy, that black cave, the freshly gnawed bones with shreds of red meat still hanging to them. He suddenly gave a little squeal of fright and ran back down the slope

and toward the bullberry patch as fast as he could go.

No one was there to meet him and he ran on and on toward camp, soon meeting his mother and old Red Crane and Lone Bull and Otaki and their mother. As quickly as he could, he told the old man about the trail of the animal and the cave and gnawed bones.

"Ah ha! And you saw gnawed bones in the cave!" Red Crane exclaimed. "And the tracks leading to the place were big and round? Well, my young hunter, it was not an otter you were following, it was a lynx; perhaps even a mountain lion."

"Kyai-yo!" the women cried out. "To think that he followed a sometimes killer of children!"

And his mother snatched him up in her arms and said that he should not go anywhere alone again for a long time.

"Huh! the boys must learn," said Red Crane; "and anyhow no harm has been done. Now, son, you go tell your father to

come with his guns and the dogs, and be sure to tell no one else; we want all the berries and the animal in the cave for ourselves."

White Wolf was at home in the lodge. When Sinopah told him what was wanted he snatched up his rifle, called the big dogs, and set out so fast on the trail that the boy had to run to keep up with him. They soon overtook the others, and in a few minutes all were looking at the trail in the snow, while the dogs sniffed at it and growled, their hair bristling straight up on their backs.

"It is the trail of a mountain lion," said White Wolf.

"It is," Red Crane echoed, "and a very large one, too."

White Wolf started to follow the trail and made the dogs keep behind him. After them came old Red Crane, and then the women and children. They all soon arrived at the foot of the slope leading up to the cave, and then White Wolf told them to stand where they were while he went on with the dogs.

When quite near the foot of the cliff, he told the dogs to go on, and they rushed ahead on the fresh trail all in a bunch and barking eagerly. But the moment they arrived at the mouth of the cave, and looking in smelled the animal there, all at once they dropped their tails between their legs and backed away with hoarse growls. They were not hunting-dogs like our hounds. All they were good for was to guard camp, and, before the time of the horse, to carry burdens. White Wolf scolded them, but could not make them go into the cave. They just whined and shivered, and looked at him with pleading eyes.

Seeing that they would not go in, White Wolf at last cocked his rifle and walked slowly to the entrance to the cave, then stooped down and looked in. At first he could see nothing; but he kept looking and looking, and after a time saw two greenish, shining spots away back in the darkness, that he knew was the light of the animal's eyes.

Then he raised his rifle and fired it after a long and careful aim.

Boom! went the gun, and the powder-smoke for a moment hid the cave from the view of those watching at the foot of the slope. When White Wolf fired his rifle he at once sprang off to the left of the cave, and none too soon. Out of it and through the smoke came a yowling, tawny mountain lion that rolled and twisted around on the snow while blood streamed from a bullet-hole in its neck. The dogs now turned brave and closed in on it, only to be bitten and clawed by the furious big cat, and knocked off in all directions by its big front paws. Several of them never stopped running until they reached camp.

Sinopah and the other children, as well as the women and the old man, stood watching all this from the foot of the slope, all of them so excited that they never spoke a word. They saw White Wolf hurriedly reloading his rifle, and were fearing that, after

all, the wounded animal would get up and run before he could shoot it again. But no; with one last weak kick it suddenly lay still in the snow, and then they all ran up the slope to look at it. Sinopah took hold of the forelegs and tried to lift it, but he could n't; the animal was far bigger and heavier than he.

"Ha! It is a she deer-killer," said White Wolf; "and by the looks of her there must be some young ones back there in the cave. Here, father, hold my gun while I go in there."

He was not gone long, and returned with a wee little mountain lion in his arms. It was no larger than a house cat, and its light-colored, fuzzy fur had faint dark spots. It was so young that it did not know enough to be afraid of man, and when White Wolf stroked it and rubbed its head, it purred just as our house cats do, only much louder than they.

"Oh! Oh! Give it to me, father," Sino-

pah cried, and soon had it wrapped in a corner of his robe, where it kept right on purring.

While White Wolf and old Red Crane were skinning the big cat, the women and children went back to the berry patch, where they soon gathered nearly all of the fruit on the trees, and then they went home to their lodges, where they spread the berries on clean rawhides to dry. A part of the fruit was given to Otaki to dry in the little play lodge.

That evening, as Sinopah sat beside his grandfather with the mountain lion kitten in his arms, he asked why service-berry bushes had so many sharp thorns.

"Old Man made them grow there," his grandfather replied. "Listen. It was this way: Old Man made the world, and all the animals and trees, and everything on it. But if he was a world-maker, he often was very foolish and forgetful.

"One day Old Man was walking on the edge of a cutbank beside the river, and hap-

pening to look down he saw clusters of beautiful red berries in the water. He was very hungry, so off came his clothes and off he dived from the bank to get some of the fruit. But although he swam and dived a long time he could see no more of the berries, so he climbed up the bank and lay down. Looking at the water again, there were the berries in it, just where he had seen them before, and off he dived again after them, and could not find them when he got into the water.

"And so he kept climbing out on the bank, and diving again after the berries, until he became so weak that the last time he nearly drowned. It was all he could do to get back on the bank, and there, happening to look up, he saw that the little tree over his head was full of berries. At that he tossed a stick at the branches, and saw that when they moved, the branches and the berries in the water also moved. Then all at once he saw that he had nearly died diving after the shadow of the berries, and that made him

very angry. As soon as he could he got up and beat the tree with a club, and made thorns grow thickly on its branches: 'There! after this all your kind shall have thorns,' he said, 'and those who want your fruit in plenty must beat it off with clubs.'

"So it is to-day, when our women gather quantities of the berries for winter use, they have to club it from the branches in order to save their hands."

CHAPTER XI

SINOPAH JOINS THE MOSQUITO SOCIETY

ON a summer day several years after the people wintered on the Two Medicine, old Red Crane and White Wolf sat on the shady side of their lodge smoking a big pipe turn-about, and idly watching a crowd of children playing tag. Swiftest of them all was Sinopah, although some of the other boys were older and taller than he. White Wolf laid down the smoked-out pipe and smiled happily as he softly rubbed his small, firm hands together. Indians, you know, especially those of the plains, were noted for their small and beautifully shaped hands and feet.

"Well, my son," said Red Crane, "why your smiles — what is it that makes your heart glad?"

"That is it," White Wolf replied, point-

ing at Sinopah, who was far in the lead of the boys and girls who chased him. "I tell you this, father," he added, "there is in this child of ours the making of a great chief. Some day, if we live, we are going to be very proud of him."

"Ai! Ai! That is so. You never spoke truer words," old Red Crane agreed. "How good he is, and how fearless! And how popular also! Children from all parts of the camp are ever coming to ask him to play with them."

"That is the great point in the making of a chief," said White Wolf. "No matter how brave a man is, no matter how successful in war, if his people do not love him, he can never become a leader."

"Huh! As if I did n't know that!" Red Crane exclaimed. "Why, son, that is what I was always teaching you in your young days; because of your goodness, of your kindness to the poor, to the widows and orphans, you are chief to-day."

White Wolf made a gesture of assent. "Well," he said, "it is time that we take Sinopah in hand for his training. As a beginning, let us have him join the Su-is-ksis-iks at their next meeting."

Here, now, I have something to explain that is very interesting, and that is that nearly all Indian tribes of the country had a number of societies, some of them so secret that only a very few of the most prominent men ever learned their mysteries. The tribe that had, and still has, the most fraternities, or secret societies, is the Hopi, or so-called Moqui tribe of northern Arizona. There are several hundred secret orders in this tribe, the greatest of them being the Snake and the Flute societies. It is the Snake order that gives every two years the great snake dance, in which, after many secret rites and prayers in their kiva, or sacred house, the members perform a public dance, during which they carry live and deadly rattlesnakes dangling from their mouths.

All these societies in all the tribes are for a purpose. The Hopi, or "People of Peace," as they call themselves, live in a desert country, and depend upon their little plantings of corn, beans, and squash for their food. They are not, and never were, hunters and warriors. Now, the most important thing in all the world for the Hopi is rain; rain to make their gardens yield a plenty of food. So it is that the object of all their secret societies is to bring the rain. All the secret rites in the kivas, all the dances, have that end in view.

See, now, how different were the Blackfeet. They were hunters, and wanderers over a great country extending south from the Saskatchewan to the Yellowstone River, a distance of seven hundred miles, and from the Rocky Mountains eastward for several hundred miles. That was their country, their hunting-ground, and on it swarmed thousands and thousands of buffalo, elk, deer, antelope, and many other kinds of game. Along the

borders of this great stretch of country were many tribes always trying to enter it and kill the game, and to save themselves the Blackfeet were obliged to make war on them and keep them out of the country. So it was that the fraternities or societies of the Blackfeet were societies of warriors and for the making of warriors. The least of these was the society of the Su-is-ksis-iks, or Mosquitoes, which White Wolf mentioned.

The Mosquito Society was composed entirely of young boys, but at the head of it were two or three old men who were their teachers, as they may be called. It was the duty of these old men to give talks to the boys on the right way to live, to instruct them in the ways of war, to pray for their long life and success, to teach them certain dances, and above all to make them honor and obey the teachings of the gods, especially the Sun.

Evening came. Tired and hungry, Sinopah entered the lodge and sat by his father's side. His mother set before him a long, heavy

rib of boiled buffalo meat, a dish of service berries, a bowl of soup, and he ate a big meal. Pausing once between mouthfuls, he said: "We played tag and none caught me. We went into the river and I was the leader in the race when we swam to the far shore and back."

White Wolf and Red Crane looked at each other and smiled, and the old grandfather said to himself: "Ai! Ai! The time has come."

The meal was soon over, and then White Wolf said to the boy: "My son, your days of tag-playing are about over. Your grandfather and I have made up our minds that you are big enough now to become a Su-is-ksis-ik. He will take you to the next meeting of the society."

"Oh, that will be good," Sinopah cried. "I am to become a member of a warrior band. How long will it be before I can join a higher one? I would like to be an Ai-in-i-ki-quan."

"Oh, that time is yet some winters ahead," his father answered. "You have to go to war before joining that order, you know."

The Ai-in-i-ki-kwaks, or Seizers, were the police of the great camp. It was their duty to guard it in time of danger and to carry out the orders of the chiefs. For instance, at times when there were great herds of buffalo near camp, the chiefs would order that no one should go out by himself to hunt and so scatter the animals and make it hard for all the hunters to get a plenty of meat and hides. Certain days were set when all the men would go together and make a big hunt. If any one broke that rule, the chiefs would order the Seizers to punish him, and punished he was. Sometimes the man was whipped and his weapons smashed; or, worse, he might not only be whipped, but his lodge and property would be torn to pieces and some of his horses killed.

Besides the Mosquitoes and Seizers, there were a number of other orders, the Buffalo

Bulls, They Who Carry the Raven, the Dogs, all parts of the great society of the tribe, which was called I-kun-uh-ka-tse, All Friends.

On the morning following the talk of White Wolf and Red Crane, preparations were begun for Sinopah's entrance into the Mosquito Society. First of all, Red Crane changed the manner of dressing the boy's hair. It had been daily combed and plaited into four long braids, two of them falling just behind, and two just in front of the ears. To these was now added a fifth braid, a slender one drooping beside the one just in front of the right ear, and the end of it was wrapped with a narrow strip of otter fur, believed to be the favorite fur of the Sun. This fifth braid was the scalp-lock. Were Sinopah to be killed in battle the enemy would take it as a trophy of the fight.

Right after the morning meal the boy's mother had begun to make a pair of moccasins for him, and she kept at the work for some days. The tops or uppers of them were

solidly embroidered with brightly colored porcupine quills, each small quill tightly fastened in place with many stitches of very fine sinew thread.

In the mean time, old Red Crane fumbled around in his several pouches and finally found four beautifully tanned, snow-white antelope skins. "These your grandmother tanned the summer before she died," he told Sinopah. "I have been saving them for you. They are for your first war-suit. Watch, now, how I cut them, for after this you will have to make your own clothes."

The old man then spread a skin out flat on his couch and cut it into an oblong square after measuring one of the boy's legs. A few stitches then made of the material a wide-flapped legging. Next, the flaps were fringed by slitting them every quarter of an inch along their length, and then ornamented with tufts of red-dyed horsehair and parts of scalps that the old man had himself taken in battle. The other legging was made in the same way.

The other two skins were fashioned into a loose, big-necked, fringe-seamed shirt that reached nearly to the knees. Snow-white weasel skins with black tail tips were hung all around the neck and down the length of the sleeves, along with more red horse-hair and scalp-locks; and lastly, Red Crane painted several blue and yellow things, that looked like small lizards, on the back and front of the garment. Sinopah asked what animal they represented.

"That I cannot tell you," the old man answered. "It is my medicine; my secret helper that came to me in my fasting dream. Yes, in that fast, when my spirit wandered far, I found this little water animal, and it promised always to help me when I prayed to it. It has helped me. It has saved my life in many a dangerous place, so I put the mark of it on here and will pray to it, to help you until you get a medicine, a secret helper, for yourself."

"And when shall I get it?" Sinopah asked.

"Let me see; let me see," Red Crane mused. "You are now of age twelve winters. Three winters after this will be your time to fast. You will go alone to some sheltered place away from camp. You will lie there without food. You will pray continually to the Sun; to the Moon; the Stars; to all the world animals. Maybe you will lie there four — five — or even seven days, eating nothing, drinking nothing except the water that your mother will take you every day. And you will sleep; you will dream. In your dream, when your shadow, your spirit goes forth on adventure, then you will find your secret helper. I shall pray that it be, that which you find, very strong medicine."

"It will be strong medicine!" Sinopah declared. "Grandfather, I have the feeling in here, right here in my heart, that in that fasting time I shall find a very powerful secret helper."

The meeting of the Mosquito Society was still some days off, but there was no more

than time for Sinopah to get ready for it. The skin of the otter that Red Crane had captured under the river ice was fashioned into a combined bow-case and arrow-quiver, and ornamented with bands of fine porcupine embroidery. A new bow and new arrows were made by Red Crane and White Wolf to put into it. The bow was longer and more powerful than any that the boy had yet handled, but he was a big-muscled boy and could easily bend it. The arrows were real war-arrows; of thin, straight shafts, firm feathering, and small, sharp, barbed points that would pierce far into any living thing and could not be pulled out; also, a new beaded belt was made, this to hold the knife-sheath and support the breech-clout that covered the loins.

Then came at last one of the great days in the life of Sinopah. Dressed all in his new war-clothes, with otter-skin bow-case slung on his back, he went with his grandfather to the meeting of the Mosquitoes. It was

held in a very large lodge of one of the chiefs. Many boys were there, sitting close together on the couches, but none of them had as fine clothes or were themselves as handsome as was he. But they were all his friends. When he entered they cried out: "Oh, here is Sinopah. Welcome, brother, welcome."

Red Crane went to the back of the lodge and sat with two old men. They talked together for a few minutes, and then one of them, first calling out for silence, made a long prayer. He begged the Sun, and all the gods of the sky, the earth, and the waters, to give them all long life and happiness, and always a plenty of game for food. At the end of the prayer all the boys cried out, "Yes, all you great gods, have pity on us; have pity on us."

Next the old men took up their drums and beat them in time to a war-song they sung. The boys all arose then and danced around and around the fireplace, old Red

Crane often stopping them to show one of the dancers his mistakes. Then after the dance they rested, and one of the old men gave them a talk on kindness of heart. During another rest, old Red Crane spoke about bravery, saying, among other things, that for the good of the tribe one must be ever ready to give his life.

And so, in dancing, in listening to talks by the old men, the day passed, and toward sundown, very tired and happy, Sinopah went home to rest. All the evening he was very quiet, and was first of all the family to go to bed. Early the next morning a little girl stuck her head in through the doorway of the lodge and called out: "Oh, Sinopah, get up and come with us. We go to the river to play."

The boy raised himself up and looked at her. "No, little sister," he answered; "I shall go no more to the river to play with you. I am now a Mosquito. I have now to learn how to be a man."

Sinopah joins the Mosquito Society

So it was. In one short day, young as he was, Sinopah passed out of his childhood days into those of his youth, the beginning of the life of one of the greatest of Indian chiefs. On that day he for the first time went with his father to hunt, and returned in the evening with meat of his own killing tied to the saddle. With his new bow and on a swift horse, he had joined in a buffalo run and killed a young bull.

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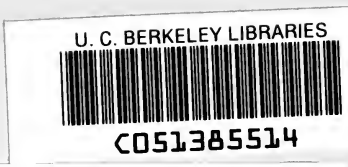

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